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CHRIST IN THE HOME

or the

Culture of Family Religion

G. B. F. HALLOCK, D. D.

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CHRIST IN THE HOME

OR

The Culture of Family Religion

—BY—

GERARD B. F. HALLOCK, D. D.

Author of "Journeying in the Land Where Jesus Lived," "God's Whispered Secrets," "Teachings of Jesus Concerning the Christian Life," "Upward Steps," "Beauty in God's Word," etc.

"As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."—Joshua 24:15.

PUBLISHED FOR
THE FAMILY ALTAR LEAGUE
—BY—
THE GLAD TIDINGS PUBLISHING COMPANY
LAKESIDE BUILDING, CHICAGO, ILL.

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—TO—

THE FAMILY ALTAR LEAGUE

Which I esteem one of the most fundamental and useful Christian agencies of our time, this book is dedicated.

THE AUTHOR.

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INTRODUCTORY WORDS

It is a genuine pleasure to write these few introductory words to a book such as the author of "Christ in the Home, or The Culture of Family Religion" is herewith presenting to the Christian public.

Thank God, the truth is being emphasized in these days that Christ must be given his rightful place in the professedly Christian home, if we are to entertain any hope for the coming kingdom of righteousness in the midst of the multifarious influences of modern life that are making for other than the things of God.

The home is the moulding-room of character; it is the training school of destiny and how can we expect the sons and daughters of this day to be otherwise than irreligious and worldy or sometimes even wicked as long as the influences which tend toward godliness are quite forgotten while the parents join with their offspring in the untiring pursuit of the pleasures and treasures of the life that now is.

Among these influences the Family Altar stands pre-eminently conspicuous. Oh, the uncounted multitudes which this blessed custom has kept from going wrong! And though some have gone wrong in spite of it, in after years when the voices of that dear old place have grown silent and the old homestead has become the property of others, the memory of those sweet and holy hours has brought many a

wanderer back in tears to mother's and to father's God.

Old John Randolph said, "I should have been an atheist had it not been for the recollection and memory of the time when my mother used to take my little hand in hers and cause me on my knees to say, "Our Father Who Art In Heaven."

Dr. Hallock has done well in writing this volume at this particular time, calling the home, as it does, back to the dear old custom of family prayer. It is timely indeed. Coming abreast of the Family Altar League and other similar endeavors it furnishes a mighty inspiration and impetus to the work they are doing.

The book is written in Dr. Hallock's usual clear and interesting style and each chapter when begun holds you to the end. It is destined to be an epoch-making volume in this department of Christian literature. Every home should have it, and even as we pen these introductory words we find ourselves praying that it may find the widest possible circulation.

A more appropriate volume for a wedding present one could scarcely conceive; and with the insertion of a proper blank form for clergymen to fill out, as some of them are being prepared, it will most certainly prove an ideal gift from the minister to the newly-wedded he unites, as a marriage certificate and souvenir of their wedding day.

May the blessing of God rest upon this book and may the day soon return when the family altar will be the rule in the Christian homes of America and not the exception.

WILLIAM EDWARD BIEDERWOLF.

Monticello, Indiana, September 1, 1911.

A FOREWORD

Within the past few years the Church has felt the thrill and blessing of several new and sudden movements for progress and uplift within her own bounds. The Brotherhood movement is one. The Adult Bible Class movement is another. The widespread establishment of Mission Study Classes is another. But of the various new movements not one has been received more gratefully or has given promise of more profound results and widespread blessing than the organized and increasingly successful efforts of the Family Altar League to lead parents to establish in their homes the family altar. The promotion of the movement is of necessity by quiet means and results cannot be fully known. But of this we are sure, that nothing could be more wise or more resultful than such effort. It was one of our profoundest present day thinkers who recently said: "We can never save America until we turn the forces of our endeavor across the threshold of the American home." The very occasion of his remark was in recognition of the fact that there is already under vigorous headway a real advance in this direction.

As goes the home so goes the world. Everything that is good in the church or in society is first planted, tended, shielded and nurtured in good homes. The Church must look for its spring and source and fountain head in the spiritual life of the Christian home. Why shall we not expect the Christian home, as in former days, to be the nursery of

true piety, where religious principle shall root itself deeply in the hearts of parents and children alike? Why shall we not definitely expect that the genius and temper and spirit of the home shall be such as to foster the fear of the Lord and high regard for his ever-blessed Word?—that it shall be so hedged and fenced and safeguarded against the influence and contagion of the world that it shall be a place where Christ himself shall dwell and be filled with the aroma of his presence and the atmosphere of his love?

To this end nothing is more important than the establishment and maintenance of the family altar. Said John Howard, the distinguished philanthropist, "Wherever I have a tent, there God shall have an altar." Why should not this be the cherished sentiment of all Christians? If we have a roof over our head and a family to gather beneath it, why should not the family altar, and all for which that stands, be central in the life of the home?

It is in the hope of making at least some slight contribution toward this end that this book is sent out. We have thought of many young married couples and that it might be a help to them at the very first in establishing the home altar. It is the wedding day at evening. A new home has this day been created. The two are united not alone by their affection for each other, but by their love to God and desire to serve him. It is to be a Christian home. They both have expected it and desired such a home. How are they to begin? Let there be no embarrassment, but perfect frankness. Let them sit down and read together, for instance, such a passage as John 2:1-11: "And there was a marriage at Cana of Galilee . . . and Jesus was bidden." Then bowing together in prayer let them tell God how happy they are, how eager for his presence, how they want him to be a guest in their home, and ask him to bless them

always with his help and favor throughout the whole of their life journey.

Most young people have this purpose in mind, but too often they put off day after day the beginning of their family worship until they almost lose sight of the good intention they had cherished. It may be that such a book as this, with selected Scripture lessons and many brief but carefully chosen prayers, will prove a welcome help at the very beginning of the home life, as well as in later days, or on special occasions. It is for the same reason we have included a chapter of brief table-blessings designed to promote that goodly custom of "grace before meat," so beautifully natural, so valuable as a mode of Christian testimony, and so fully commended to us by the example of our Lord Himself. Besides, daily bread is rendered sweeter to the body by the wise and humble mind which recognizes how wonderful it is that there should be any.

Little children also in all ranks of life should be carefully taught to bow their heads in a momentary thankfulness for the food provided, no matter how simple or how brief the words which they are taught to utter. There will be found therefore, in the chapter entitled "Grace Before Meat," some simpler forms for children's use; also another short chapter of familiar morning and evening prayers for little children. There is also a chapter containing closet prayers, not alone for those who are young but also for those who are older and amid the heavier cares of life; and one also of selected family prayers suitable for all occasions.

But the main body of the book is made up of a series of Bible studies, or familiar comments on some verse or short passage of Scripture, one or more for each week of the year. Individuals or families kept at home from church by

sickness or other inability may like to have a little home service of their own, hence each section supplies a Motto for the Week, a brief Prayer, Hymns and Lessons, with a short Meditation on a Scripture text. Even if most of the family expect to attend church, some may be unable. For their sakes among other reasons, the selection for the day may be considered appropriate for use when gathered at the family altar on Sunday morning. For the shut in, for any who would welcome them for silent Sunday afternoons, or for use as short services at summering places, or in hotel parlors, in vicinities where there may be no regular church service, they may be found appropriate and useful.

Not the least of their value may be to my brethren in the ministry to whom the topics may prove suggestive for devotional meetings or regular pulpit preparation, especially in view of the fact that there are additional selections for the great seasons of the church year,—New Year Sunday, Easter, Children's Day, Independence Day, Labor Sunday, Thanksgiving Day, Christmas, etc.

The book is sent forth with the earnest prayer that it may prove a means of grace to all into whose hands it may come, and so that it may aid in some degree at least toward the bringing in of the Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

G. B. F. H.

HOW TO HAVE A HAPPY NEW YEAR

Motto For the Week: *"Wisdom is the principal thing, therefore get wisdom."* Prov. 4:9.

Hymn: *"While with ceaseless course the sun."*—John Newton.

Scripture: Proverbs 3:13-35.

Meditation: *HOW TO HAVE A HAPPY NEW YEAR.*

Text: *"Happy is the man that findeth wisdom."* Prov. 3:13.

"Happy New Year!" This is the New Year wish we make for our friends. It is no less the New Year wish we cherish for ourselves. It is a good wish to make, and a good wish to cherish; but trying to bring its fulfillment in others' lives and in our own life is better than the mere wishing.

There are wrong sources of supposed happiness to which people are liable to resort.

I. If we would be happy this year we must not follow the will o' the wisps of sinful indulgence. There are some common preventives of happiness, such as undue sensitiveness, egotism, borrowing trouble—these and such as these—which we must avoid during the coming twelve months if we would have the year prove a happy one.

But there are some positive ways in which happiness can be won. It is well not to be overcome of evil, but the Bible tells us plainly that the best way to accomplish that

result is the strategic way, the indirect way of overcoming evil with good. There is a positive, straight-forward, good old-fashioned way of becoming happy, and that is by being good. "A good man shall be satisfied from himself." "Happy is the man that findeth wisdom," and that means the kind of wisdom of which the wise Solomon speaks in another place when he says, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." If you are not happy you can become so by becoming a Christian, true, sincere, heart-enlisted; or if you are a Christian then by becoming a better Christian.

II. A second suggestion, akin to the other, is that happiness comes not by what we possess but by what we are. The secret is that of character; which is not from without, but within. The good man's true self becomes his own content. "A good man shall be satisfied from himself." "The kingdom of God is within you," and all the way to heaven thus becomes heaven begun.

III Again, happiness, is won by conquest over sin. As sin indulged mars happiness, so sin overcome increases happiness. The more sin is triumphed over during the coming year the happier we will be. With a clear conscience, a pure heart, and a sense of the contest with evil well fought, happiness is assured.

IV. Let us not forget that happiness is found also especially in doing good to others. As Byron says: "All who would win joy must share it, happiness was born a twin." Happiness and selfishness cannot flourish on the same stem. Selfish people are ever seeking and never finding happiness; unselfish people are finding happiness ever without seeking. It is to be obtained indirectly. We must give away in order to become rich. Unselfishness is the road to happiness and to Heaven.

We have somewhere read of a certain minister who preached one day on "Heaven." The next morning he met one of his well-to-do members who said: "Pastor, you preached yesterday a good sermon about heaven, but you omitted to tell us one thing; you did not tell us where heaven is, and that is the very thing I wanted to know." "Well, then," said the minister, "I will answer your question now. I have just come from the hilltop yonder. In that cottage is a member of our church. She is sick in bed with a fever. Her two children also are sick in the other bed. They have not a lump of coal, a stick of wood, or flour, or sugar, or bread. If you will go down town and buy ten dollars' worth of provisions and send up to that woman, then go tell her that you have brought those provisions in the name of Christ, then ask for the Bible and read to her the twenty-third psalm, and then get down on your knees and pray,—if you don't see heaven before you get through, I will pay the expenses you have been to." The fact is that people who do these things are not asking where heaven is. They know where it is. It was said of an old Puritan that "heaven was in him before he was in heaven." A Scotchman being asked if he ever expected to go to heaven, gave the quaint reply: "Why, mon, I live there." When Edward Payson lay dying he said: "If I had known twenty-five years ago what I know now I might have walked in the light of the New Jerusalem all these years." He had just entered the Beulah Land experience. Many do not enter because, like him, they think it is only to be obtained after death. It is the same heaven in both worlds. The only difference is of one degree. "Lay hold on eternal life." It is something for us to get hold of now. It is a thing of the future, but it is a thing of the present too; and even the part of it which is future can be so realized and grasped by faith as to be actually enjoyed while we are

here. Pardon, peace, rest of soul, assurance of hope, abounding joy, and grace beyond measure, these and such as these are the blessings that come to the man who has this inner heaven in his heart. "The kingdom of God is within you." All the way to heaven may be heaven begun.

Prayer: "Dear Heavenly Father, our years are in thy hand, and we are so glad we can call thee Father, that we may come to thee with all our joys and all our sorrows. Make us, we pray thee, more worthy to be called thy children. May we not be content with the comforts of this world only, but may we lean on thy loving breast the coming year; and let the new year be the best we have ever known, we pray thee. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

Unite in offering the Lord's Prayer.

A DAILY RATE FOR EVERY DAY

Motto for the Week: *"As thy days so shall thy strength be."* Deut. 33:25.

Hymn: *"Wait my soul upon the Lord."*—William F. Lloyd.

Scripture: Psalm 46:1-11.

Meditation: *A DAILY RATE FOR EVERY DAY.*

Text: *"A daily rate for every day."* 2 Kings 25:30.

There is a very beautiful and meaningful expression which occurs in the account of the kindness shown by the king of Babylon to Jehoiachin. Though a captive "he spake kindly to him, and set his throne above the throne of the kings that were with him in Babylon; and changed his prison garments; and he did eat bread continually before him all the days of his life. And his allowance was a continual allowance given him of the king, a daily rate for every day all the days of his life."

I. "A daily rate for every day." This thought is directly applicable to God's ways of dealing with us. For one thing it rebukes in us the folly of trying to live on yesterday's grace. It is as wise to talk of gaining physical strength and support for to-day on the food we received yesterday, or last week, as to talk of building up and strengthening the soul on the blessings and grace received in the past. If a soul would be active, alive and strong its divine food, like the manna from heaven given the children of Israel, must be fresh from the sky each day.

The spiritual food given and received must be "a daily rate for each day." Toplady has well said in speaking of living to-day's life on yesterday's grace: "The act of breathing which I performed yesterday will not keep me alive to-day; I must continue to breathe afresh every moment, or animal life ceases. In like manner yesterday's grace and spiritual strength must be renewed, and the Holy Spirit must continue to breathe on my soul from moment to moment in order to my enjoying the consolations, and to my working the works, of God."

II. This thought of "a daily rate for every day," also reveals to us the privilege of living one day at a time. Like with the old pendulum in the fable, despair comes to many a heart when life is viewed in the aggregate. But this is not the way to view life. It does not come to us all in one piece. We do not get it even in years or months, but in days,—day by day, one day at a time. We have only one day's duties or trials or cares in a day, and grace is promised "a daily rate for every day"; why then should we not live the life of trust, of simple, humble dependence on God, without thought or worry?

III. This thought of "a daily rate for every day" also rebukes in us the sin of borrowing trouble. Why borrow trouble for any to-morrow when to-morrow is sure to have its measure of grace? With too many Christians it is just fret, fret, fret all the time; not over actual but anticipated troubles—worrying over imaginary evils. As Tupper says: "It is evils that never happen that have mostly made men miserable." But why should we worry when we have such a promise as this—"A daily rate for every day"? That means Monday's grace for Monday, Tuesday's grace for Tuesday, and so on.

IV. Once more, this thought of "a daily rate for every day" is suited to stimulate and encourage us in all Chris-

tian effort. Some may be only beginning the Christian life. Is this not a blessed assurance with which to start out? What more could you ask? You are to have grace and strength "a daily rate for every day." But this is not alone an encouragement for beginners. Fellow pilgrims, climbing the rough and rugged steeps of life, weak or strong, young or old, in sunshine or in shade, whatever your circumstances or need, take heart, take hope, take courage! "The Lord God omnipotent reigneth!" Whatever your burdens, whatever your duties, whatever your sufferings or your labors, this promise is yours, and yours for all time—"A daily rate for every day,"—"As thy days so shall thy strength be."

Prayer: "Let Thy love so warm our souls, O Lord, that we may gladly surrender ourselves with all we are and have unto thee. Let thy love fall as fire from heaven upon the altar of our hearts; teach us to guard it heedfully by continual devotion and quietness of mind, and to cherish with anxious care every spark of its holy flame, with which thy good Spirit would quicken us, so that neither height, nor depth, things present nor things to come, may ever separate us therefrom. Strengthen thou our souls; awaken us from the deathly sleep which holds us captive; animate our cold hearts with thy warmth and tenderness, that we may no more live as in a dream, but walk before thee as pilgrims in earnest to reach their home. And grant us all at last to meet with thy holy saints before thy throne, and there rejoice in thy love for ever and ever through Christ, our Lord.—Amen."

Offer the Lord's Prayer in unison.

THE UPLIFTED FACE

Motto for the Week: *"I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help."* Ps 121:1.

Hymn: *"Awake, my soul, stretch every nerve."*—Philip Doddridge.

Scripture: *Joshua* 1:1-18.

Meditation: *THE UPLIFTED FACE.*

Text: *"Then shalt thou lift up thy face without spot."* Job 11:15.

This phrase is extremely beautiful as a figure of speech, and at the same time very suggestive as a fact in religious experience. It expresses the attitude of a soul at peace with God according to the provisions and terms of the Gospel. It suggests at least five things.

I. First, confidence. Confidence is involved. For a man without peace and confidence will hang his head with guilt and shame, not lift it up without spot. It would be well for us to cultivate more the grace of the uplifted face, the look of trust and confidence in our heavenly Father. He is good; his attitude toward us in loving; his acts are wise. Let us lift up our faces toward him without spot, without any dark frown of distrust or doubt.

II. Again, in the uplifted face fellowship is involved. We dare to look steadily, with the uplifted face, upon those we know and love, and whom we are sure know and love us. "Then shalt thou lift up thy face without spot," when you have fellowship with God; not alone when you have

confidence in him, but when you know him, are on terms of intimacy with him.

III. Futhermore, a degree of happiness and cheer is involved in the face uplift without spot. The uplifted face implies a degree of happiness, and increasing happiness results from the uplifted face. Do we realize the fact that there is help and cheer in the state of looking up? If you are sad, or in sorrow, or burdened, try looking up. Look up into the sky. See the hill-tops, the fleecy clouds, and the blue heaven beyond. The fact is we all look down too much. We look down when we are at our work, when we are thinking, when we are troubled, when we are ashamed, when we are sorrowful. Looking down is usually the sign of some sort of burden being on the heart or mind. Not that it is wrong to look down. Not that we should pay less attention to work or duty. But we must learn also to look up. We must learn the soul-expanding look. We must have the cheering change of the upward look, also the resting change as one lifts his eyes occasionally from the book he is studying. We must not live in a despairing or desponding attitude. The upward look brings freedom and cheer and hope. Look up. Lift up your eyes without spot and you will see the hills and the trees and the stars and the blue heavens beyond. This will calm you and steady you and comfort you.

A woman who had lost her first born and only child fell into a sort of settled state of sorrow and melancholy. She was a Christian, but she seemed to find it impossible to be comforted. A wise friend told her to look up, to try looking up into the sky often every day. She testified that it broke the spell of her melancholy, and that it had proven an immense help and comfort to her.

Let us lift our eyes and our hearts with them to larger and nobler things, to joyous things. David in exile once exclaimed, "I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills, from whence cometh my help." What David saw was the temple and the prayers that ascended from it, the sacrifices there offered, with the smoke ascending to heaven. He heard the music of the temple choir. He became conscious of the truths there uttered, and they became real and precious in his memory. Yes, he came into fellowship with God himself. This is the advantage of the upward look. It brings us both consciousness of God and into fellowship with him. David was an exile, but by the upward look he saw these things, heard them, realized them.

IV. Fourthly, purity also is hinted at here. The face without spot is clean and pure. The spots make it unclean and in need of cleansing. "Lift up thy face without spot." Cleanse your heart, your mind, your thoughts—cultivate purity that you may be able to lift up the face toward God.

A young Christian woman, speaking of her mother, said to the writer recently in conversation: "Mother always believes in people who look her straight in the face." We have long given a growing son the advice: "Whenever you speak to people look them straight in the face." There is honesty and purity implied in the face uplifted without spot. It is both a sign of honesty, and it is conducive to increasing honesty and purity of heart and motive. Let us learn to lift up our faces toward God, saying "Search me, O God, and know my thoughts, try me and know my heart, and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

V. Lastly, beauty is also implied in this phrase. The face that is covered with spots and stains has its beauty marred, and perhaps really destroyed. O that we may be

able to lift up our faces to God in the beauty of holiness. Holiness gives clear views of sin, and leads men personally to abstain from all appearance of evil and to teach others to do so. The holy man's skies are clear, his sun shines steadily, his eyes are on the throne, and he moves forward with unspeakable peace, and with a certainty of victory, for he sees God and cannot doubt. Holiness transforms and transfigures men; it brightens the eye, quickens the step, exalts the life, makes faith perfect, renders vocal the silent tongue, cures heart-ache, banishes bitterness, and satisfies the soul with all good things. Holiness is heaven on earth, and holy men and women are its ministering spirits, its earthly angels. Let us seek this beauty—the beauty of holiness. Let us strive to be able to lift up the face without spot. Let us try to realize the transforming results of the uplifted face. The change is "from glory to glory," from one degree of spiritual beauty to a higher. It is a gradual growth. A Christian is sure to grow lovely by just loving,—by just going on in love for Christ. It has been fabled from old times that the graceful swan was changed from a most ugly bird into its present beauty, merely because of its constancy to its mate. But, oh, how Christian fact is sure to outrun classic fable! The soul grows wondrously lovely just by loving, by pouring out its faithful affection; and all the more so when the object of its affection is the Lord Jesus Christ, the One altogether lovely. We behold his face, Jesus' face, as in a glass, and are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.

Prayer: "Our heavenly Father and Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, we worship thee, for thou art worthy of the faith of our minds, the love of our hearts and the service of our lives. Though thou art great and the

whole earth is full of thy glory, yet thy greatness doth not separate thee from us. Thou art nigh us, even in our hearts, and in thee we live and move and have our being. May we turn this intimacy of thy life with ours into conscious fellowship in which we shall know thee and walk in the light of thy face. Disclose to us thy presence in the world, may we see thy thoughts written large in nature, trace thy steps in providence, and especially may we see wondrous things in thy Word. So may the world become our Father's house, in which we shall rest and serve and pray and fear no evil. May our task be our teacher, and our work our worship. Amidst the temptations and trials of life, its work and wear and worry, grant us purity and patience and peace. May gentleness and helpfulness and courtesy brighten and beautify all our social relations. Keep us from discouragement and complaint, and may we fight the good fight bravely and keep the faith until we win and wear the crown. And this we ask in Jesus' name. Amen."

Offer the Lord's Prayer together.

CALLING AND CONDUCT

Motto for the Week: *"Ye shall be witnesses unto me."* Acts 1:8.

Hymn: *"So let our lips and lives express."*—Isaac Watts.

Scripture: Col. 3:1-25.

Meditation: *CALLING AND CONDUCT.*

Text: *"I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called."* Eph. 4:1.

When Paul spake of himself as a prisoner of the Lord he means that he was in confinement for the cause of the Lord, or regarded himself as having been made a prisoner because the Lord had so willed or permitted or ordered it. He did not feel particularly that he was the prisoner of Nero, but only a prisoner under Nero for some good purpose or will of the Lord. From his prison in Rome he sent a loving message to the Ephesian Christians. It was a charge that they should walk worthy of the vocation wherewith they were called. The word *walk* is often used in the Bible to denote life and conduct. The word *vocation* means a call or an invitation. Hence it means that divine invitation or calling by which Christians are introduced into the privileges of the gospel. The exhortation as it comes on to us is definitely one that Christians should walk as becomes their Christian profession, that in view of our calling we should take care as to our conduct.

I. Let us notice, first, the nature of our calling. It is a calling of God. This is true because it is God Himself who calls us, out of darkness into light, out of the kingdom of Satan unto the kingdom of His dear Son. This is a "work of God's Spirit, whereby convincing us of our sin and misery, enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ, and renewing our wills, he doth persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ, as he is freely offered to us in the gospel." This calling or vocation is therefore through the agency of the Holy Spirit, and consists in influencing the mind to turn to God and enter into his kingdom.

It is a high calling. Phil. 3:14. That is, it is an honorable calling, one which places honor upon us. It is a calling to serve a high and honorable Master. It is a high calling also because the price attached to it is the greatest possible one, eternal life.

It is a holy calling. 2 Tim. 1:9. This is true, for one thing, because the nature and purpose of it is holiness,—holiness in the highest possible measure on earth and perfect holiness in heaven at last. In Hebrews, 3rd chapter and first verse, it is spoken of as a heavenly calling. It is well called such as it comes from heaven and draws us to heaven.

It is a profitable calling. One of the things we ought to get fixed firmly in mind is that it pays to be a Christian. It is not true that Satan treats his followers better than Christ does his. Satan is not the author of our good things and Christ of our evil things. The best things for this life and for the life that is to come are given his followers by Christ. There is no plainer statement in all God's Word than the one which says, "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." We have a rich Master, one who pays his servants well. The Christian calling is, indeed a pro-

fitable calling. This would become plain were we to study more deeply the things to which we are called. We are called, for example, to the knowledge of God. 2 Peter 1: 2, to the faith of Christ, 1 Cor. 1:9, Gal. 2:6, to holiness of life, 1 Thess. 4: 8, Rom. 7:1, to peace with God, peace with our own consciences, peace with one another, and crowning all, eternal life, 1 Peter 3:9, 1 Thess. 2:12.

II. Let us notice, secondly, the obligations of our calling. "That ye walk worthily." Practically, Paul's exhortation is this, that considering what God had done for them, to what a high estate and condition he had called them, he would that they should prove themselves good Christians and live up to their profession,—that they should walk worthily, suitably, congruously to those happy circumstances unto which the grace of God had brought them since they had been converted from heathenism to Christianity. The exhortation takes in the whole circle of Christian duties. If we exhort a man of noble birth or of distinguished rank in life not to do anything unworthy of himself, disgraceful to his family, or unbecoming his high station, we appeal to one of the strongest possible motives. Paul says it is our vocation to be Christians. We are called to be Christians, therefore we should live like Christians. We are called to God's kingdom and glory. We should therefore keep his kingdom and glory in mind, and walk as becomes the heirs of them.

How then are these obligations we are under in the Christian calling to be satisfied?

First, by humility and gentleness. The apostle goes on to tell us some of the ways of walking worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called. We are to walk "with all lowliness and meekness, with long suffering, forbearing one another in love; endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." By lowliness we are to un-

derstand humility, the opposite to pride. By meekness, he means that excellent disposition of the soul which makes men unwilling to provoke others and not easily provoked or offended by others. It is opposed to anger, resentment and peevishness. Long suffering implies a patient bearing of injuries without seeking revenge. Forbearing one another in love signifies bearing with others' infirmities out of the principle of love; that is, we will not cease to love our fellow Christians on account of their infirmities. The best Christians have need to bear with one another and to make the best of one another. We find much in ourselves which it is hard to forgive ourselves; therefore we must not think it strange if we find in others things which require some effort for us to forgive. Yet we must forgive them as we forgive ourselves, and for the same reasons. Let us not forget, too, that it is by these very things we are enabled to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. The first step towards unity is humility. Without this there will be no meekness, no patience, no forbearance, and without these no unity, and without unity there can be no peace. Humility and meekness restore the peace and keep it.

The obligations of our Christian calling are to be satisfied, also, by a walk that subordinates our own pleasure and advantage to the welfare of others. This means, for one thing, a walk that does not give the lie to our profession, a wise and winsome walk that pays attention to what our influence will be over others, or how our conduct comports with our calling. There are many people who read Christians who never read the Bible. "Ye are my witnesses, saith the Lord." Well has it been said that the professed Christian is the world's Bible,—the only Bible the majority of outsiders ever look at. They form their inpressions of Christianity, not as it is revealed in the holy Scrip-

tures, but as it is revealed in us. On the other hand a consistent Christian life is a power anywhere and everywhere. The religion which keeps the speech pure and honest, the temper sweet and kindly, the actions considerate and unselfish—such a walk and conversation is a constant telling of the gospel story, of the real good news to men. "But," as Mr. Moody once said, "a man may preach with the eloquence of an angel, and if he does not live what he preaches and act out in his home and his business what he professes, his testimony goes for naught, and people will say it is all hypocrisy, after all; it is all a sham."

The sin of life denial, of walking unworthy of our vocation, of not having our conduct consistent with our calling, usually comes through some indulgence which shows a low state of religion in the heart and a special lack of loyalty and devotion. Some Christians seem to wish to walk as near the line between right and wrong as ever they can just as they do not go clear over to the wrong side. Like some trees, they stand on the right side of the fence, but they lean a little over, and when they fall they are sure to fall the wrong way. Such Christians not only bear false witness against Christ to the world but they show a special lack of fidelity and loyal devotion. God has plainly told us that he wants his people to live so that men can "discern between the righteous and the wicked, between him that serveth God and him that serveth him not." God expects his people to live so you will know the difference. Now, if Christians associate in the ways of the worldly, if they engage in the pleasures of the worldly, if they indulge in the sins of the worldly, how are you going to know the difference, how shall you discern between? God intends that there shall be a difference and that men shall be able to see the difference.

Prayer: "Oh our God, hear us, as once again we who love thee kneel to pray. The only offering we can bring is the adoration of our hearts. They are only human hearts, but Christ dwells in them. We have chosen him as our Redeemer and Friend. We can not comprehend the glory of our Guest, but we in a little realize his love. Make us worthy of it, we beseech thee.

"We mean to serve thee, our Father. Not always do we know how rightly to do what thou wouldest have us, but as far as we can learn from thy word, we do desire to help bring the Christ to his sovereignty in this world. Help us to realize our own desire. Keep us within the limits of the great law, 'Thou shalt love.' That is our purpose, oh our God. Let us not fail of it, we beseech thee, and forgive us, oh Lord, forgive us our sins, for Christ's sake Amen."

Repeat the Lord's Prayer in unison.

RELIGION IN THE HOME

Motto for the Week: *"He saith unto him, Feed my lambs."* John 21:15.

Hymn: *"Saviour like a shepherd lead us."*—Anon.

Scripture: Deut. 6:1-25.

Meditation: *RELIGION IN THE HOME.*

Text: *"A devout man and one that feared God with all his house."*—Acts 10:2.

The apostles had been preaching to the Jews only God wanted the Gentiles also reached. He selected Cornelius as a non-Jew, through whose conversion he would show his purpose to the outside world, and Peter as the one from whose lips the message of grace for all men should first proceed.

But leaving this larger theme, we wish to gather some lessons from the reference to the home religion of Cornelius, this devout Gentile. The record is that he was a "devout man and feared God with all his house." In other words, he not only feared God himself, but his whole house was taught to fear him. His was a religious home.

I. The religion of the family is the most primitive and ideal. The family is a radical and fundamental organization and agency in human society. Church and State are dependent upon it for their existence, and for whatever makes them beneficial to the world. It is the original source of authority, government, morality and religion.

There the Church was organized. There human government was instituted. There marriage was divinely solemnized. Without family ties, family government and discipline, family virtue and piety, the Church could not exist, and society would quickly relapse into anarchy and barbarism and fall to pieces. Is it any wonder, then, that God guards the family sanctity and life with such jealous care and lays upon marital and parental relations such solemn sanctions and obligations? Is it any wonder, either, that good people mourn at any attack upon family life or are alarmed when seeing any sign of looseness or decay in family religion?

II. Family religion has been peculiarly approved and blessed of God.

It is a remarkable fact that most men eminent in life had in childhood a religious home. Bishop Haven, after careful investigation, says "Three-fourths of the most prominent scientists, authors, and merchants are not more than two generations removed from the manse. They are either sons or grandsons of ministers." A French author has collected similiar statistics. If you were to have read to you a list of the sons of clergymen who have attained honorable distinction you would be surprised to find how near to religious homes are the eminent men of the modern world. There are three good reasons why this is so; one is that such homes have the blessing of God upon them, another is that the atmosphere of a religious home is best suited for the formation of character, a third is that the atmosphere of a religious home is best suited to the highest development of the mind. And these three things are the great sources of success in the world.

The influence of a religious home in childhood will almost surely assert itself, in some way, in after years. No matter how wayward some of the children may be,

they can never quite forget the old home wherein was a praying father and mother. The morning prayer and evening hymn linger in the halls of memory, and are sure to bring forth good results in the life.

III. It may take courage to have religion in the home. It usually does.

It has been told of the late Judge McLean, of Ohio, that he was converted when on a visit away from home. The evening of his return he told his wife and family at the supper table of the change he had experienced, and at the close suggested that they go into the next room and have family worship. In that room were a number of lawyers waiting to consult the judge. The wife offered their presence as an objection, and suggested that they go to a more retired part of the house. "No," said the Judge, "the Lord has been crowded out of every part of my house for years, and now he shall have the best room we have; besides there are some lawyers who would not be injured by attending prayers." He went into the parlor, told the lawyers he had been converted, that he was going to have family prayers, and would be glad to have them remain, but if they desired not to do so, they would be excused. They all remained, and the strong stand for Christ did the Judge good, his family good and the lawyers good. It was a good beginning of a life of out-and-out service for Christ. It took courage for the Judge to do what he did—as much courage as for many a soldier in battle to walk right up to the mouths of hotly firing cannon.

We heard the late Dr. John G. Paton, veteran missionary to the New Hebrides, say that among the thousands of Christian homes among those converted cannibals there is not one that does not have daily family prayers. They put to

shame many much more highly favored church members in this country.

IV. To secure religion in the home, parents should not hesitate to use a good degree of authority in their households.

A boy did not want to go to church, but the Christian father kindly but firmly insisted that he should. The father said: "As long as my boy sits at my table he must sit in my pew." As long as our children are at home with us we should use the authority God gives us to guide them in the matter of their religious training.

In every community there are throngs of children who are suffering from lack of this parental care and duty of authority. It they feel like going to church or Sunday-school they go; if not, they stay at home, or roam the fields, or stray in the streets. No parental authority is used to secure their religious training, either in the home or outside of it. This neglect is a sin for which the parents must answer at the bar of God. It is one from which they are likely to reap the bitterest results both here and hereafter.

The plea we would make is a very earnest one for more religion in the home, and for more true Christian homes. Some writer has said, "France builds theatres and palaces, Italy builds churches and convents, but America builds homes." The civilization of these countries attests the truth of the remark. Our prayer is that our beloved America may be known throughout the world, becoming truly worthy of such high praise, as the land of Christian homes. Let each family do its part to bring about so desirable a condition and the consummation so devoutly to be desired will not be long delayed.

Prayer: "Our Father, we thank Thee for our home on earth, and for the home that awaits us in heaven. Keep

our home this day, and accept our thanks for the blessings that fill it. Restrain us from all unkindness toward each other and toward any of our fellows, and make us thoughtful, considerate and Christlike. Bless the homeless and the sad, and make us mindful of their need. Send us forth to do thy will, in the name of Jesus our Lord, and bring us at last to the home above."

Unite in offering the Lord's Prayer.

BUILDING SKYWARD

Motto for the Week: *"Built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone."* Eph. 2:20.

Hymn: *"How firm a foundation."*—Anon.

Scripture: Matt. 7:15-29.

Meditation: *BUILDING SKYWARD.*

Text: *"For, See, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount."* Heb. 8:5.

Of late years, perhaps because of the value of the land, many buildings are occupying the air, rather than the ground. Immense structures are being piled skyward in the great cities of our country. But there are regions where such buildings will never be attempted, for the frequent earthquakes in those parts would make them unsafe. But whatever we may think of those high buildings let us not forget that heavenward is the direction in which every man should build himself. And this is the direction in which he may build, no matter what country or clime he may dwell in. There is no earthquake that can shake down a character whose foundation is Christ and whose direction is heavenward.

The building of character is the most important business of life. It matters little whether we are rich or poor in this world's goods. It matters little what of material things we leave behind us. What really matters is what

we build into our being; what sort of an edifice we make out of our own selves.

I. The first thing of importance is the pattern or plan we follow. When Moses was on the mount of God he saw a plan of the tabernacle. God revealed to him just how he would have it built and ornamented and furnished. And repeatedly afterwards God charged him, "See that thou make it in all things after the pattern shewed to thee in the mount." There are mountain-top experiences which we all have, times of spiritual exaltation, when God shows us as in a vision how he would have us build our lives. He sets before us high ideals. He reveals to us the beauty of holiness. He makes love and purity and gentleness and serviceableness seem desirable to us. Sometimes this pattern is revealed to us as we study God's word. As we read the commandments, as we learn the beatitudes, as we come to know the life and teachings of Christ and his apostles, we are made to realize more and more that God is showing to us the pattern for our life, not only in its grand outlines, but in the more delicate lines of its possible beauty and ornamentation. You have such a pattern before you, have you not? You know what sort of a life-building you would like to erect, do you not? You have been on the mountain. God has spoken to you. God has opened the eyes of your spiritual vision. Surely you wish to build heavenward. But desire alone will not erect the temple of a noble character. It will not put up a building which an earthquake cannot shake down. A good plan is good; but something more is necessary.

II. Next after the plan must come the foundation laying.

The building that is going to reach very far skyward must have a good foundation. We may as well know it first as last, there is but one sure foundation upon which a

life-building can be erected; and that foundation is Christ. "Behold, I lay in Zion a foundation stone, a tried stone. a precious corner stone, a sure foundation" "Other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Christ Jesus." A character must be built for storms. Houses are built out of doors. They stand in exposed places. The rains must beat upon them. The winds must blow. The floods must come. Houses must be able to stand stress. Characters are built for out-of-doors also. Men must stand storms. Storms of temptation are sure to sweep over them. Floods of evil will certainly flow against them. If men are going to stand; then they must be built on the Rock.

III. A house is not finished that has a good plan and a sure foundation. There must be labor expended upon it, faithful patient building unto the end.

"Souls are built as temples are,—
Here a carving rich and quaint,
There the image of a saint;
Here a deep-toned pane to tell
Sacred truth or miracle.
Every little helps the much;
Every cheerful, careless touch
Adds a charm or leaves a scar."

No magnificent building ever grew of itself. Some one had to work upon it. Stone by stone it rose, each block being laid in its place by toil and effort. No beautiful character ever grew of itself. Characters are built as temples are. That friend you admire so much did not dream himself into goodness,—into truth and love and purity. A boy was asked, "Is your father a Christian?" His answer was, "Yes, he is but he is not working much at it lately." The child evidently did not understand the question; he thought reference was made to his father's trade or business. But one thing is sure, no man builds skyward, no man erects a noble edi-

fice of character, without working at it. Choose the best materials. Be watchful as to your companionships. Be careful what pictures you see, what books you read, what pleasures you indulge, what habits you form, what business you pursue; for out of such materials as these your life-building is being erected.

"Build it well, whate'er you do;
Build it straight, and strong, and true;
Build it clear, and high, and broad;
Build it for the eye of God."

Prayer: "We beseech thee, O God, to save us from our empty profession and mere lip service in the Christian life. We thank thee for the assurance that Jesus Christ is indeed the way, the truth and the life. Help us to accept him sincerely, to trust him fully and to serve him faithfully. Thus may our lives be strong and calm, unshaken by life's tempests, unmoved by the waves of loss and sorrow. Built upon the eternal rock, may we be a refuge and a help for others in distress. Grant that the evidence of Christ's power to save may be so manifested in us that we may be his witnesses continually, and everywhere may men be persuaded that in him alone can true security and perfect peace be found: We ask through Christ, our Lord. Amen."

Unite in offering the Lord's Prayer.

FORGETTING DISCIPLES

Motto for the Week: *"I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High."* Psalm 77:10.

Hymn: *"Jesus, Thy boundless love to me."*—Paul Gerhardt.

Scripture: Psalm 103:1-22.

Meditation: *FORGETTING DISCIPLES.*

Text: *"Now the disciples had forgotten to take bread."* Mark 8:14.

How often the familiar words of the Bible take on a new light as we come to them in varying moods. One time we find one sentence fixing our attention, at another time another. The Book is a great store-house from which, whether glad or grieved, whether perplexed or filled with the spirit of rejoicing, we can find what we want. Then, too, it is also full of quaint asides which are rich in meaning as one meditates on them, and little touches of human nature that bring its people into kinship with us. Such a brief sentence is a reference to the disciples as they were crossing to the other side of the Lake of Galilee with Jesus, after the miracle of the feeding of the hungry four thousand. "They had forgotten to take bread," it is said, in explanation of their misgivings of heart, when Christ, knowing their likelihood, at this period of his popularity, of being led into the desire for political power warned them against the influence of the Pharisees. "Beware of their leaven" —their subtle, insidious power, was his word, and these

"slow of heart" turned to each other with self-accusations. "We forgot to bring bread," was their self-condemning thought. "It is that of which our Master is speaking."

"O men of old," exclaims one, "we are at one with you. We understand and sympathize with you. We, too, live among the literalities so much that it is hard for us to rise to spiritual conceptions and interpretations. When the Holy Spirit has some truth to reveal to us we only half listen and dimly comprehend. We catch enough to know that somewhere we are lacking, and we turn with quick thought to some outer duty in which we have failed, some mint, or anise, or cummin, which we have forgotten to tithe, and begin to condemn ourselves. We lose entirely the deep inner meaning of His word and go blundering on our way."

The disciples' confession of shortcoming gives us a fellow-feeling. We, too, "forget" so many things which are needful. We are forgetting disciples. How prone we are to forget!

I. We forget to take bread. We do not now refer to the bread that feeds the body—for this it was that the disciples forgot to bring—but the bread that feeds the soul. How sadly true it is that we are forgetting disciples in this respect. Did you read your Bible before you started out this morning? "No," you say, "I forgot it." You forget it often, do you not? You forgot it before you retired last night. How long, indeed, is it since you sat down to a real good meal of Bible promises, Bible exhortations, Bible food? How long? "Now the disciples had forgotten to take bread." You never meant to neglect the Bible so long. But you are a forgetting disciple. But we must not "forget to take bread" if we wish to grow into strong, healthful Christians. Bible-fed Christians are not weaklings. Starved Christians are. Stir yourself; arouse your memory;

engage the healthful influence of habit, and cease to be a forgetting Christian in the matter of taking bread. Do not forget to take the life-giving, heart-strengthening, soul-saving bread of the Word.

II. We forget to take bread—the nourishing bread of prayer. "Now the disciples had forgotten to take bread." Forgetting disciples! Disciples, professed followers of Christ, how many of you have forgotten to take your proper allowance of the nourishing bread, the soul-food of prayer? You forgot to read the Bible this morning! You forgot to pray! Did you pray last night before you retired? No, you forgot it. Have you prayed at all during the past week? No, you forgot it. You are astonished to think you did. You begin now to reproach yourself. Indeed, you begin to realize that it is a long time since you really prayed. You have bent your knees for a few moments sometimes morning or evening, or you dreamed you were praying as you sleepily rolled into bed at late evenings. But have you taken bread? Have you prayed? Have you communed with God, sought and obtained strength from Him, have you really prayed? But we must not "forget to take bread"—the nourishing soul-food of prayer, if we wish to grow strong as Christians. Re-awaken the desire to pray. Re-establish habits of prayer Bring yourself to feel anew the need of prayer. Cease to be a forgetting Christian and seek regularly the soul-food of prayer.

III. We forget to take bread—the soul-strengthening food of the Lord's Supper. The spiritual life is much like a watch—very liable to run down. It is easy to forget. This is one of the reasons, we believe, why God has given us the sanctuary, and sanctuary privileges, and has called us to consider one another to provoke to love and to good works, and to not forsake the assembling of ourselves to-

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gether, as the manner of some is. It was for the same reason Christ gave us the sacrament of the Lord's Supper—because he knew how liable we are even to forget Him: and it was for this reason he said, "This do in remembrance of me." It is as when a dying friend gives one a keepsake, a ring, or a bracelet, or some token, and says: "Every time you look upon this you will think of me." It was for the same reason Christ left this memorial of himself—in order to be remembered, in order not to be forgotten, in order to produce in us the blessing of oft-recurring spiritual reminder. But have you forgotten to take bread? Have you forgotten to take the soul-nourishing food of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper? How long is it since you have been to the Lord's table?

IV. We have many other shortcomings due to forgetfulness which give us a fellow-feeling with the disciples who were in that boat with Christ. We forget many things that are needful. We might have gone a little out of the way to do a kindly act. We might have spoken more sympathetically. We might have listened more patiently. We might go through the world with our eyes and hearts open, but persistently we do not. When the opportunity is past it flashes across our minds in an instant what we might have done. But we may take heart of hope from these very blundering disciples. Dull and blundering as they were—so like ourselves—they came in time to merge themselves so completely in Christ that their work was grandly done.

Prayer: "O God, we believe in thee, do thou strengthen our belief. We hope in thee, do thou confirm our hope. We love thee, do thou vouchsafe to redouble our love. We adore thee as our first principle; we desire thee as our last end; we thank thee as our punctual benefactor; we call upon

thee as our supreme defender. O God, be pleased to guide us by thy wisdom, rule us by thy justice, comfort us by thy mercy and keep us by thy power. We ask in the name of Christ, our Lord. Amen.

Unite in offering the Lord's Prayer.

SOLITARY PLACES IN LIFE

Motto for the Week: *"Touched with the feeling of our infirmities."* Heb. 4:15.

Hymn: *"O Holy Saviour, Friend unseen."*—Charlotte Elliott.

Scripture: Heb. 4:14-16; 5:1-14.

Meditation: *SOLITARY PLACES IN LIFE.*

Text: *"And he went a little further."* Matt. 26:39.

It is said of Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane that "he went a little further," to endure the agony he had to bear, apart from his disciples. They could not follow him in person or in fact all the way. Their sympathy was sweet and helpful. In presence they could go with him a a certain distance. But when it came to the supreme measure of the anguish of the hour no human heart could help. He must be alone with God.

Just so are there times in our lives when all human help fails to help. However loving and willing to render aid our friends may be, and however responsive to them and unwilling to separate ourselves from them we may be, yet there must come a place of division, a point from which, with all our thoughts and longings and heart-needs, we must "go a little further." Companionship must stop short of the depths of our Gethsemane. Christ "went a little further" and was alone with God. So must we go into some of the solitary places of life, the heart and the flesh crying out for the living God, and with no one but God able

to meet us or understand us, commune with or comfort us as we tarry in the depths of the garden of grief or solitude into which we have entered.

What are some of these solitary places of life?

I. One is the Gethsemane of bereavement by death. Friends may be ever so kind, may do ever so much, may send sweet messages, or say the most tender and sympathetic words, and yet—we must "go a little further." All companionship is left behind, and we suffer alone. No one can appreciate just how lonely we are without the loved one, just how much he or she was to us and how deep the grief we experience. Even a mother or loved wife or dearest sister or brother could not be made to understand fully our feelings. We have gone "a little further" than companionship can go and are alone in the garden of grief.

II. Another such solitary place is the Gethsemane of enforced decision of duty. This was one special feature of Christ's solitariness in the garden. Would he go on to the cross or not? Was it his duty to go on? In his human nature Christ shrank from death, as we all do, and he even prayed that the cup might pass from him. The struggle of duty was fought out to a decision there in Gethsemane. It was a struggle Christ had to make entirely alone. His disciples could not help him. No one could. Alone he fought. Alone he won. It was a mighty spiritual victory, for when he retraced his steps from the garden's seclusion it was with his face steadfastly set toward Calvary.

Just so there are decisions of duty we must all make, and every place of such decision is a solitary place. Friends with their advice and sympathy and help may go part way, as Christ's disciples went with him into the garden; but there comes a place where they must stop and we go "a little further" on; for in its final analysis every decision we make must be our own. Indeed, unless we make it, it is

not our decision at all. If we make it, it is our own, and it had to come from us in a solitary place when no one else was by.

III. Another such solitary place is the Gethsemane of bodily pain. No one can feel your pain but yourself. No one else can endure your weariness. How powerless you were when your sick child lay moaning in feverish anguish to enter into his soul and diminish his suffering by sharing it! He was your own dear child; but were you not shut out as by a wall of adamant? Just so also are your friends and lovers shut out from you when you are in pain, for you are in another of those solitary places in life when you went "a little further" on.

IV. Another such solitary place in life is the Gethsemane of diappointed hopes and aspirations. People have disappointments of which they can never tell. Some of our fondest hopes have been foiled and yet we could not utter even a whisper about them in any ear. Some of our highest aspirations, unrealized, have put us into a region where we dare not unburden our souls to any one, no matter how near and dear.

V. There are many such solitary places in life, but we mention only one other, the valley of the shadow of death. We die alone. If you have ever stood at a death-bed, then you know what we mean. Have you ever seen a soul start off on the long journey? Then you know how lonely a thing it is to die. Loving friends may be about the bed, and glad to go just as far along as ever they may, but there comes a point of separation. They must stop and the soul go on—alone out into the great unknown!

But we are not quite right in speaking of these solitary places in life as being necessarily absolutely without companionship. When Christ went "a little further" into the garden, God was with him. And, blessed be God, when

we must go into our Gethesmane we may have Christ with us, a Companion and Friend who can understand us and help us. He can do for us what no other friend can do. When bereaved, or deciding duty, or in bodily pain, or when disappointed in our hopes and aspirations, he will be with us, if we have taken him for our friend, to comfort and to cheer. And even at last when we come to die, he will still be our faithful guide, and we will be able to say with David: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me, Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me." The fact that there are solitary places in life only serves, then, to give emphasis to that other fact of our need of Christ for a Friend. He will be your Friend and mine if we let him. He stands at the door of your heart. Let him in!

Prayer: "Almighty God! our Heavenly Father, who hast given us in thy Son Jesus Christ a fountain of life, which springing up within us, can make all things new, we thank thee for the deeper meaning which he gives to life—for the quickening sense of duty, the faith under sorrow, the immortal hopes, which we owe to him. And we pray that his divine instructions may be so received by us with grateful hearts, that no resistance of ours may hinder his freely working within us a miracle as when he changed the water into wine. In the power of his Spirit may our griefs be transformed into consolations, our infirmities into strength to do well, our sins into repentance, our fainting and halting spirits into an heavenly mind; and finally, the doubts, the discouragements, the trials of this earthly life into the full assurance and unclouded bliss of an eternal life with thee, through the same Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

Repeat together the Lord's Prayer.

FOGS AND FAITH

Motto for the Week: *"All things work together for good to them that love God."* Rom. 8:28.

Hymn: *"Lord of all being, throned afar."*—O. W. Holmes.

Scripture: Psalm 121:1-8.

Meditation: *FOGS AND FAITH.*

Text: *"Clouds and darkness are round about him; righteousness and judgment are the habitations of his throne."* Ps. 97:2.

The central thought in this psalm is that God reigns. This is stated in the first verse to be sufficient reason for universal joy. "Let the earth rejoice." Other reigns have produced injustice, oppression, bloodshed, terror; the reign of the infinitely gracious Jehovah is the hope of mankind, and when men generally yield to it the race will have its paradise restored.

Because God is God it is impossible for men to understand all his acts. "His way is in the sea and his path in the great waters."

I. The first fact we notice, then, is this, that God governs the world mysteriously. "Clouds and darkness are round about him." God veils himself essentially. So he revealed himself at Sinai, when clouds and darkness were upon the mountain. So he revealed himself to the children of Israel along the wilderness journey, in a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. So he revealed

himself when his glory filled the temple of Solomon at its dedication. So he revealed himself on the mount of transfiguration when a "bright cloud overshadowed" the disciples. God veils himself in his providential dealings with men. His ways are past finding out. Around the history of the Church dark clouds of persecution have hovered. Around the histories of nations dark clouds of revolution and war and bloodshed have hung. Around the history of individual Christians dark clouds of strange providential dealings have wrapped the soul in mystery and distress. God knows the ways of men, but men know not God's ways. "His judgments are unsearchable and his ways past finding out." God rules the world mysteriously,—mysteriously to men of finite minds. We are not able to take into our conception the doings, or reasons for the doings, of an infinite God.

II. But the second fact, and one which we gladly notice is that God governs the world righteously. He may rule mysteriously but it is not mistakenly or wrongly; it is altogether and only righteously. God's ways may be dark, but they are just. Righteousness is the essential perfection of God's being. It is his nature. What he does is right. "Clouds and darkness are round about him;" but "righteousness and judgment are the habitations of his throne." Righteousness is his immutable attribute, and judgment marks his every act. As some one has well said, "Absolute power is safe in the hands of him who cannot err, or act unrighteously."

However mysterious God's dealings there are three great sources of consolation to Christians. The first is in the thought of God's love. God is love. His very nature is love. All his acts are prompted by love. The second is the thought of God's wisdom. He is infinitely wise. He knows what is best for us. He knows the end from the beginning. His

ways are the wisest ways for us all. The third is the thought of his power. He is able to make all things work together for our good. He is able to make good come out of seeming evil. He says, "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter." The time is coming when God will make plain to us the reasons for all his dealings with us; and then we shall approve them and say, "He has done all things well."

"Did I ever mention to you," writes E. P. Hood to a friend, "what I thought as I saw the picture of a German painter some time ago? I could not make out what he meant by it. It was called 'Cloud Land,' and seemed nothing but cloud upon cloud. As I looked I saw that every cloud turned into an angel or an angel's wing; and the whole picture, which seemed only at first a mass of gloom, looked out upon me with a hundred angels' eyes. So with all clouds, if God comes nigh to us by them; look at them and they will turn into angels. They are not desirable to us in themselves. We foolish men would walk always in day brightness—we do not want clouds—but God knows their value, else he would never send them unto us."

This is certainly a beautiful illustration of the truth that every dispensation of Providence, however dark it may seem, is a token of God's love. There is an angel, a messenger of grace in every cloud, and he is visible to the eye of faith. Sometimes the darkness that prevents our seeing is only a fog that we should look above. A beautiful illustration of this is given by Rev. Isaac O. Rankin, in his sermon from the text, "Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith."

"Sometimes the sailor, homeward bound, from the ship's deck can see no land," says he, "only a bank of mist

low-lying on the horizon's rim. Chart and compass tell him that the land is near, but where the sky and water seem to meet there is only a haze.

Then, if he lifts his eyes above that mist and heat, some mountain peak will stand out clear against the sky. The onward way, the port, the broad base of the mountain, and the continent of which it is a part are lost in haze, but the summit rises out in clear air, far, visible and guiding on toward home.

So we must journey toward the heaven of our faith and hope. We look to the ship's course, and there is only mystery of haze of sea and shore. But, when we lift our eyes to the hills, the land mark of our faith, the uplifted figure of our Lord appears.

" 'Looking unto Jesus'—the uplifted look that sees the shining of the love of God in Christ—is the secret of assurance and of peace amid earth's doubts and fears."

Let us remember that though clouds and darkness are sometimes around the God of Providence yet righteousness and judgment and Fatherly love are ever the habitation of his throne. Trust him. Trust God, even in the dark. We do not know our way but we do know our Guide.

Prayer: "Almighty God, Giver of all good, who hast given, above all thy gifts, the crowning mercy that we are called in Christ Jesus to know and love and serve thee, we would bring thee thanks and praises for the divine light which reveals the heart of grace in thy leading of souls and peoples. Help us to rise to a fit gratitude for the overrunning blessings which thou givest ever, even to the darkest lot and life, the temporal felicities, the divine comforts, the eternal hopes. That all things are of thy mercy, and in thy mercy, we thank thee. Make us to sing thy song in

the light and in the night to touch thy hand and be at peace. Grant, we pray, with all other blessings, the best gifts, thankful and trustful hearts, that thou mayest be our Lord and King forevermore. We ask through Christ, Amen."

Offer the Lord's Prayer in unsion.

THE DUTY AND INFLUENCE OF FAMILY WORSHIP

Motto for the Week: *"This day is salvation come to this house."* Luke 19:9.

Hymn: *"Another day begun!"*—John Ellerton.

Scripture: Deut. 11:1-21.

Meditation: *THE DUTY AND INFLUENCE OF FAMILY WORSHIP.*

Text: *"As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord."* Joshua 24:15.

Nothing indicates the feebleness of modern piety more than the absence of family worship from so many Christian homes. If we are not religious in our homes, and if our religion does not shape itself into home worship, it certainly is of a very doubtful character..

It is a happy fact that there are so many signs of a present and real revival of interest and practice in regard to this duty and privilege of family worship. There is a family altar league which has recently enrolled many thousands of families in a covenant to make it the rule of their life to gather daily for Bible reading and prayer. We believe this league is only at the beginning of its great mission and success. Much emphasis has been placed on this duty and privilege also by the various young people's organizations in many denominations. Faithful pastors and other Christian workers have recognized the loss from a falling away in the habit of having family prayers and are calling

upon all Christians to return to the goodly custom. In permitting the falling away—on account of the great rush of our modern life—Christians were being involved in a loss far greater than many of them realized. But many families are now awakening to the conviction that the family altar is not alone a duty and a privilege, but that it is a necessity to the best interests and the highest happiness of the individual and of the family, as also that the neglect of the family altar is a menace to the well-being of both the Church and the State because the quality of life in either cannot be better than the quality of the average family life.

I. Let us think of family worship first from the standpoint of duty. That it is a duty is plain in view of the fact that the parents make the religious atmosphere of the home. The question of what it shall be is in their hands.

It is a duty also in view of the fact that such recognition is due to God. God certainly ought to be recognized in the family life.

That it is a duty is plainly seen in the fact that Jehovah pronounces blessings upon all who do in this way honor him—see Deut. 11:21, 23 and 2 Samuel 6:11—and a curse is pronounced upon the "families that call not on his name," Jeremiah 10:25.

II. The influence of family worship. It has a remarkable sin-deterring influence. Many a child or older person has been kept from yielding to temptation under the memories of the morning or evening prayer at the home altar. Day by day as we go along it deters us from sin, and all through the years of later life the memories of the parental prayers have a hallowing and sanctifying result.

There is also wondrous educating influence in the daily assemblage of the family for prayer. When through child-

hood and youth the custom has been regularly maintained its influence over the life is such as can never be wholly obliterated. But think especially of how much actual knowledge of God's Word the repeated reading brings, and how much instruction is gained also in the art of prayer and of free converse with God. Family worship is a great training institution. It impresses the children, and at an age when impressions are the most lasting. It gives a practical and personal turn to piety. It brings religion home to parents and children. It gives to the father authority, dignity and honor in the eyes of the household. It brings God into the home life in a real and impressive way. It gives eternal things importance, and thrusts back the trivial follies and fashions of the world to the places where they belong. The members of the family are bound together as they would not otherwise be, and the precious memories of the family altar linger while life lasts. There is an elevation of tone that would not otherwise come into the household. There is a spirit of obedience that would not otherwise be engendered. There is nothing else that so sweetens home life. True family worship is a fountain that brings streams of holy influences into every part of the daily life. It is a vase of perfume that sheds fragrance over all. It softens asperities. It quells anger. It quiets impatience. It settles differences. It subdues evil passions. Hearts that are drawn together at God's feet every day cannot get very far apart. The frictions of the day are forgotten when all voices mingle in the same upward-breathing petitions. As the tender words of inspiration fall with their benign counsels all feeling of unkindness melts away. The altar in the midst wonderfully hallows and sweetens the home fellowship. Besides, it puts new strength into every heart. It comforts sorrow. It is a shield against temptation. It smoothes out the wrinkles of care. It imparts strength for burden-bear-

ing. It quickens every religious sentiment and keeps the fires burning on every heart's altar. There are no drawbacks whatever to the influences for good that come in the train of devout, regular, family worship. The best image of heaven which this earth can afford is found when a household is gathered to learn God's will from his holy Word, to raise the voice in song or praise in honor of his name, and to hold communion with him in united prayer. Every family can thus breathe the air of heaven every day, and all the way to heaven becomes heaven-like.

III. The manner of conducting family worship. This is very important. It should be made so pleasant as to be looked forward to with gladness even by the youngest children. Too often it is made tedious, monotonous, burdensome. Men fall into stereotyped order which they never vary. Long passages are read, and the prayers offered are not only long, but are the very same every day from year to year, with no adaptation to the home-life, or to the capacities of children. There is no reason why the family worship should not be the most delightful exercise in the home-life. It should be the continued study of the heads of households to make it bright, interesting and profitable. To make it dull and irksome is treason to real religion. It is a sacred duty and privilege which comes to every young married couple to erect the family altar. In so doing their hearts are drawn closer than ever together, and they are made to feel as never before that they can safely trust in one another. Even love itself seems a more sacred thing and is sanctified and blessed by united prayer. If it should happen that only the wife is a Christian the duty ought not on that account to be neglected.

A devoted young lady of twenty-one became the wife of a young man who was not a Christian. But the husband admired and respected his wife's earnest piety. After some

months of their married life a friend, in answer to inquiry, learned that they had lived a life of prayer together. "Was your husband willing to pray with you?" asked the friend. "No, but we had prayers together every day, and he seemed glad to have it so. He read, and I prayed." Is it strange at all that within a brief period that husband was brought naturally into a personal experience and confession of Christian faith and that the time came when she read and he prayed? Let every married couple begin with the family altar and keep it up as long as life shall last. The blessings and benefits will be innumerable, and will last long after they have passed from earth to heaven.

Prayer: "O God, our Father, of whom the whole family in heaven and on earth is named: Bestow upon our household, at the beginning of this day, that grace which shall keep us in the fellowship of the Christian way; and grant unto each one of us that heavenly guidance and control, in all our labors, pleasures, and trials, which shall maintain our hearts in peace with one another and with thee. Graciously help and prosper us in the doing of our various duties, with a willing and a cheerful mind; and defend us all, by thine almighty power, both from inward and from outward harm; so that, when the day is ended, it may not leave us in sorrow, strife, or shame, but in true unity and thankful rest, through thy merciful favor and thy forgiving love, in Christ Jesus our Lord. Amen."

Unite in offering the Lord's Prayer.

CHRIST DWELLING WITHIN

Motto for the Week: *"Christ in you, the hope of glory."* Col. 1:27.

Hymn: *"One there is above all others."*—John Newton.

Scripture: Col. 1:1-29.

Meditation: *CHRIST DWELLING WITHIN.*

Text: *"I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."* Gal. 2:20.

There is in a Russian palace a famous "Saloon of Beauty," in which are hung over eight hundred and fifty portraits of young women. The pictures were all painted for Catherine the Second, the Empress. They are beautiful women, the artist having made a journey through all the fifty provinces of the Russian empire to find his models. The painter was extremely desirous of pleasing his royal patron, and, very happily for him, he struck upon the idea of making every picture convey a half concealed compliment to the Empress. In each picture may be detected by the close observer some hidden, delicate reference to the royal person for whom they were painted; in one some favorite surrounding is seen; in another some favorite adornment; in others some jewel, or fashion, or flower, or style of dress; so that in each one something characteristic of the Empress is seen, all tributes to her beauty or compliments to her taste. The walls, therefore, really reflect the Empress herself in whatever direction you look.

The artist, Count Rotari, made his own name immortal because of his inventive ingenuity in the flattery of an earthly monarch. But may we not make a spiritual application of this fact, and in doing so find pointed out to us something worthy of our utmost endeavors? Was it not something very like this artist's devotion, only in a higher, worthier sphere, that Paul was being moved by when he said: "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me"? The world saw Paul, the Apostle, but at the same time they saw Christ in the person of his disciple. Every grace that Paul possessed was but a faint reflection of the perfect beauty of Christ. Every virtue which Paul exhibited was only a manifestation in lesser degree of the holiness of his sinless Lord; each beauty in person or character a faint showing forth of him whom he imitated, "the One altogether lovely."

But the reason Paul was able in any degree to manifest Christ was far more vital and deep-seated than could be illustrated by any painter's power to put character and beauty on his canvas. The secret was that Christ dwelt within him. "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me."

I. Notice, first, the fact of Christ's indwelling in believers. It is a great mystery, but it is a fact. It is an unique but glorious truth that the Lord Jesus Christ actually makes his home in the hearts of his faithful people. A great mystery it is, indeed; but so are human life and the eternity of God and the incarnation of Christ profound mysteries, yet we accept them. We are plainly told in God's Word that God dwelleth with him that is of an humble spirit, that the Spirit of God dwelleth in us, and that Christ is in us our hope of glory. Christ's parting promise was that if we kept his words he would come and

make his abode with us. Christ "dwells in our hearts through faith." The figure of speech represents the idea of a building, a temple, with the Christ resident within as the indwelling guest. Far more must be implied than mere Divine influence over us, such as a friend exerts over a friend, a teacher over a pupil, or even a mother over a child. The fact is that to become a Christian is to have a new and spiritual life enter the soul, as when a seed with its living germ is planted in the dead soil.

II. Having noticed the fact, let us proceed to notice some of the blessed results of Christ's indwelling.

The first is that we are moved by a new motive. "The love of Christ constraineth us." There is all the difference in the world between trying to force ourselves under the pressure of duty and the being moved by love. It is exactly the difference between having Christ outside us and having him within. Only as we get Christ into our hearts and let him dwell with us in his Spirit, will we find the right motive moving us or that we are really attaining to any true ideal of the Christian life.

Another result will be the gradual expulsion of evil. Indeed, this expulsion may be very rapid if we will let Christ have full possession of our hearts. "Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lusts of the flesh."

Another result will be joy,—a joy that the world can neither give or take away. Christ within makes an inner joy that all earth's trials and sorrows cannot quench.

Another result will be a gradual transformation into the likeness of Christ himself.

"Finish then thy new creation,
Pure and spotless let us be;
Let us see thy great salvation
Perfectly secured by Thee;

Changed from glory into glory,
'Till in Heaven we take out place,
Till we cast our crowns before thee,
Lost in wonder, love and praise."

How much is there about us to remind those around us of Christ? Every manifestation of truth and holiness in us is only a new tribute, like the painter's tribute to his Empress, only in an infinitely higher realm, to him who is the Truth, the Life, the Way, the Holy One of God. The first move toward a Christian life is the opening of our hearts to the knocking Saviour. After that the degree of our holiness will depend upon the degree to which we give him welcome house-room in our hearts.

Prayer: "O God, who art rich in forgiveness, grant that we may always hold fast the good things which we receive from thee, and as often as we fall into sins, may be raised up by repentance. Let thy mercy come upon us, O God, in great fulness, even as our sins against thee have been many; and may thy forgiving love overflow all our transgressions that they may be covered and blotted out. Grant us, O Lord, we pray thee, to trust in thee with all our hearts; seeing that as thou dost always resist the proud who confide in their own strength, so thou dost not forsake those who make their boast of thy mercy. Jesus, our Master, do thou meet us while we walk the way, and long to reach the better country; so that following thy Light, we may keep the path of righteousness, and never wander into the darkness of this world's night, whilst thou. who art the Way, the Truth, and the Life, art guiding us. We ask all in thy dear name. . Amen."

Join together in offering the Lord's Prayer.

FOLLOWERS OF THAT WHICH IS GOOD

Motto for the Week: *"The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."* Prov. 4:18.

Hymn: *"O, Master, let me walk with Thee."*—Washington Gladden.

Scripture: Psalm 1:1-6.

Meditation: *FOLLOWERS OF THAT WHICH IS GOOD.*

Text: *"And who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?"* 1 Peter 3:13.

Peter often refers in his epistles to the persecutions the early disciples had to undergo. They frequently had to forfeit their earthly possessions; but they had a reserved inheritance. They were sustained by God's Holy Spirit, by a reliance upon Christ's infallible promises, and by an undoubting confidence in the life to come. Believers might suffer, but they could take no real harm. While this was one application made to those to whom the First Epistle of Peter was written it also had another application to them and to us. It says that if a man be a follower of that which is good it is probable that no one will have any desire to harm him. But even if evil is planned, it is certain that no one can have the power to do him any real harm. The providence of God in a peculiar manner watches over the righteous to preserve them under all events. When

God's favor rests upon us, man's enmity is either in a great measure disarmed or else it is thwarted. "For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their cry." "Who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?"

The figure here seems to be that of a path pursued.

I. Those who follow that which is good walk in a straight path. That is one advantage. It is not crooked, tortuous, troublesome, full of hard decisions. The path of right may be narrow and sometimes hard, but happily it is straight. It is really easier to be an out and out Christian, to be clear over on the right side of moral questions, to have no questions of compromise,—to walk straight.

II. Then, too, those who follow that which is good walk in a safe path. This is the special, most prominent fact the apostle is asserting. The way, he says, however straight or hard, is a secure way. There are no pitfalls, snares, or dangers in the path of obedience to God. The fellow travelers are safe companions. People who walk in the way of righteousness are mutually helpful. Their society is an additional security. Their counsel and companionship are blessed. People who walk in that way have the fellowship of God. He is always a fellow-pilgrim with his people. He pitches his tabernacle close by their tents. They walk with God. God with them, they have absolute safety. "Who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?" Will God harm you? No, he cannot, because of his satisfaction with Christ, your Saviour; because of his word, his covenant, his oath; because of his own paternal and infinite love. Will the events of providence harm you? No, they cannot, because the events of providence are not a blind fortuitous succession of events, because the events of providence are

under the control of the loving heavenly Father. Will Satan harm you? No, he cannot. He is powerful—in the number of his allies, in his wonderful range of knowledge and in his cunning and invisibility—but he is under restraint. In God and Christ and the blessed Spirit we have all-powerful defence. "We are more than conquerors through him that loved us." Will ungodly men harm you? No, they cannot. They, too, are set against the people of God, but they are also under restraint. Their own consciences, natural affection, self-interest, the customs of society, and the laws of civil governments restrain them. They are also under the direct restraint of God. "Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee; the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain." Will death harm you? No, it cannot. You will still live, and only the more immediately under the Divine care, and entirely sheltered from the attacks of foes. "Who is he that will harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?" Why, even apparent harm is real good when it comes to the obedient soul. God is infinitely loving, infinitely wise, infinitely strong. His heart prompts that which is best for us; his wisdom selects that which is best for us; his power is able to make all things work together for our good. What men often construe as danger and disaster is simply discipline, or the preparation the Christian is getting to be able to receive the highest good.

III. Those who follow that which is good walk in a happy path. They are made happy by their sense of security, by their companionships, and by the grace God gives along the way. Don't pity Christians. They are happy. Those who follow that which is good walk in a path of opportunities for usefulness also. They exert an influence for good, they do good, their lives result in good, and they receive the reward of those who do good.

Be straight. Live a life of absolute and undeviating obedience to conscience, the Scripture and the Holy Spirit. Be fearless. Be absolutely without timidity in following that which is good. Be trustful. Have absolute confidence in the goodness and wisdom of God's dealings and leadings. Be zealous. Learn the art of absolute abandonment to duty and holy living without care of consequences.

Prayer: "O Lord, thy hands have formed us, and thou hast sent us into this world that we may walk in the way that leads to heaven and thyself, and may find a lasting rest in thee who art the source and center of our souls. Look in pity on us poor pilgrims in the narrow way; let us not go astray, but reach at last our true home where our Father dwells. Guide and govern us from day to day, and bestow on us food and strength for body and soul, that we may journey on in peace. Forgive us for having hitherto so often wavered or looked back, and let us henceforward march straight on in the way of thy laws, and may our last step be a safe and peaceful passage to the arms of thy love, and the blessed fellowship of the saints in light. Hear us, O Lord, and glorify thy name in us that we may glorify thee for ever and ever, through Christ, our Lord, we ask. Amen."

Unite in offering the Lord's Prayer.

AN AGE OUT OF BREATH

Motto for the Week: "My heart and my flesh crieth *out for the living God.*" Ps. 84:2.

Hymn: *"Nearer, my God, to thee."*—Sara F. Adams.

Scripture: Matt. 5:1-16.

Meditation: *AN AGE OUT OF BREATH.*

Text: *"Oh that I knew where I might find him!"* Job 23:3.

This is an exceedingly busy age. People do not seem to have time for God. They do not seem as anxious to know God as men in the past were. We do not hear them calling out, "Oh that I knew where I might find him!" or saying with the Psalmist, "My heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God." "This," as some one has said, "is an age out of breath." It is going down to the tomb of epochs broken-winded with the pace at which it lives its hard, useful, polemic, inquisitive, restless, mechanical life. An age out of breath is an age when there is but little faith, for "he that believeth shall not make haste." An age out of breath is an age which leaves God out of its life. An age out of breath is a materialistic age, and "ye cannot serve God and mammon." It is more emphatically true now than ever: "Surely every man walketh in a vain show; surely they are disquieted in vain; he heapeth up riches and knoweth not who shall gather them." The clerk says he must be at his work early and stay late. The business man says he must put all of himself into his business or he can-

not hope to succeed, so hot is the pace of competition. So the rush and hurry are encouraged, and men push on in their breathless course. Yet people do have heart hunger. There are those who want to know God. But they fail because they are caught in the rapids of time and the torrents of trade are carrying them onward toward the fall. They fail because they fail to use the means to come into acquaintance with God.

I. One condition of knowing God is thought. It is a law in life that a man apprehends only that upon which he fixes attention. We have read that there is in the jail at Oswego, N. Y., a peculiar cell. It is made as a sort of cage and revolves all the while. In it is put any criminal who is suspected of an intention of jail breaking. In this cell the man is kept revolving all the while, does not stay in any one place long enough to dig out at the sides of the jail, even if he would. In this hurried age men are kept on the move. They do not give themselves time enough to dig out the thoughts that would enrich them with truth and free them from error. If we would "buy the truth" we must pay the price of attention, of thought. It is true that we would know God better if we thought more about him, if we "meditated on these things and gave ourselves wholly to them." We read the Bible sometimes. But do we study it? We read books, religious books, written by men of to-day. These are more interesting we feel—but do not say—than the Bible. But if we wish to know God we must study his Word. All other religious books are but as the sparks sent off from this central sun. No book has the spiritual vitality of the Bible. No book will so enable us to find and know God. Study, meditate, learn spiritual truth,—the very first condition of knowing God is thought.

II. Another means to the knowledge of God is prayer. To know about God and to know God are two very dif-

ferent things. You may read the life of Phillips Brooks or of William E. Gladstone. You may come to know many facts about these great men, facts that were even unknown to even the members of their own families. It is a good thing to know about such men. But what is knowing about them as compared to the high privileges of those who knew them, lived with, associated with them in the closeness of the home life and daily contact? People may know a good deal of God; they may hear sermons and read books and know the literature of theology. But to know God is a very different thing from knowing about God. It is in prayer we come to know God. It is in the act of prayer we come into actual fellowship, association with him. In study we learn about God. In prayer we come to know him as friend knows friend. You wish to know God? Then you must go past the mere fact of knowing about God. You must come into actual touch with him through earnest prayer. In prayer you do touch him. In prayer you feel his life actually flow into your life. Your soul is lost in him and his life flows into yours.

III. Still another means to the knowledge of God is action. Many people have no small degree of learning, of spiritual knowledge. And they have feeling, too. They go to a prayer-meeting and their hearts are moved. They hear a sermon and their emotions are stirred. They go home with good feelings and resolves. But soon these vanish into thin air. They do nothing. Next week they come back again to the church service or the prayer-meeting. Again they go through the same process, but they do nothing. If we would really know God we must add to thought and learning and feeling, actual doing.

A friend met a thoughtful young man coming out at the church door. The hour seemed a little early for the service to be over. The friend said to him: "Is the sermon

done?" "No," said the young man, "it is preached, but it all remains to be done." What we hear and learn and resolve remains to be done, and it must be done before we can really know God.

A woman came to her pastor complaining that she could not really enjoy the Bible. She read it; but it seemed to have little or no interest for her. He said: "Let me tell you how to read it. When you open it at a chapter read until you come to the first thing it tells you to do; then close the book and go out and do it. After you have done that duty, then come back to the Bible until you come to the next command. Then go and do that." The woman followed his directions. The next time she had a chance to talk with him she said that she was "finding the Bible a book of fascinating interest." Make religion real to yourself by doing. Make God real to yourself by obeying what he says. To knowing and praying add doing. That is the way to come to know God. When you do his will you will know of the doctrine.

Prayer: "Almighty God, grant that by the faithful practice of the things that we know to be true, our hearts may be purged of all evil thoughts and desires, and we be brought back again to something of the pureness of spirit by which alone thou mayest be served. Forgive all our wanderings from the light. Grant that we may escape this great condemnation—that light having come into the world, we have chosen darkness rather than light. Show us the light, and cause us to live in it, and by it to pass through the shadow of death with safety, and to abide with it evermore. Hear us of thy mercy, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

Unite in offering the Lord's Prayer.

THE PEACE CHRIST GIVES

Motto for the Week: *"What time I am afraid I will trust in thee."* Ps. 56:3.

Hymn: *"In heavenly love abiding."*—Anna L. Waring.

Scripture; John 14:23-31.

Meditation: *THE PEACE CHRIST GIVES.*

Text: *"My peace I give unto you."* John 14:27.

This is one of Christ's sweetest assurances to his followers—that he will give us peace. And it is a special kind or quality of peace he promises. The emphasis is upon the word "My." "My peace give I unto you." The peace is the same deep, abiding and blessed peace he enjoyed.

It was not the peace of affluence. Some of us think we would have peace if we had in our possession all the things we long for. We feel quite sure that if we had wealth and the things wealth can purchase we would be in a most satisfied, tranquil and peaceful state. But none of these things did Christ have.

Neither was his the peace of tranquility. Some of us are so hurried in our lives, so pressed with duties that we long for a lodge in some vast wilderness, or for the opportunity to sit down in absolute quiet and comfort, surrounded by such things as we like, and be calm and undisturbed. We long for the peace of tranquility. But Christ had not this. He was hurried, and pressed upon, opposed by enemies, appealed to by friends. His was the very opposite to a tranquil life.

Neither was his peace the peace of congenial companionship. On the contrary, he was solitary. Few understood him or were able to enter into sympathy with him or his plans. His best friends had no close appreciation of him, his impulses or feelings. He was more than misunderstood. He was actively opposed. He was hated and hounded and wounded with the voices of opposition and the clash of strife. His was not the peace of congenial companionship and friendship. Therefore, that is not the kind of peace he promised his followers.

What, then, is the peace he gives?

I. First, it is peace of conscience. Sin is war. Sin is strife. Sin puts discord into our lives. Conscious of sin, we cannot be at peace. Christ's peace was the peace of sinlessness. In the midst of all his press of work and the disturbances that surrounded him he had the peace of conscious integrity, of oneness with his Father. This is one feature of the peace he gives us. He makes us free from sin and able to enjoy the deep and abiding peace of one just before God.

II. Secondly, he gives us peace of character. He had the peace of a sound, stable, right centered character where there was no internal discord or struggle. His character had unity, harmony of purpose, was not disturbed by fickleness or changefulness. It is a great thing to possess a unified character. We do not easily attain it. We approve the right and do the wrong. We are dual characters, torn by conflict within. But Christ's peace was that of confirmed character, stable, sound, unified. That is the peace he will give us and does give us as we accept it. This is one of his greatest gifts.

III. Again, he gives the peace of abiding trustfulness. This peace also Christ had. How often we hear him exclaiming, "My Father," and showing the utmost confidence

in him. He never seemed to be the least disturbed, but believed that God's will was always good. He gives us this peace so we can truly exclaim: "I worship thee, sweet will of God." "Thy will is my peace." In the midst of afflictions and trials and troubles we have, through Christ, the peace of abiding trust in God.

IV. Moreover, this peace he gives us is the source of power. Without peace there is no power. When the mind and heart are distracted and torn with the disturbances of sin, doubleness of character and the fear of distrust, we are devoid of power; our hands are enfeebled, our hearts are distracted, our energy is dissipated. But when we have peace, the peace Christ gives, we are "free to serve." We have courage for undertaking and energy with which to bring success. Let us accept of Christ's peace, his deep, continuous, abiding peace. Most desirable of gifts is it, and we can have it if we will accept.

Prayer: "Grant unto us, Almighty God, of thy good Spirit, that quiet heart, and that patient lowliness to which thy comforting Spirit comes; that we, being humble toward thee, and loving toward one another, may have our hearts prepared for that peace of thine which passeth understanding; which, if we have, the storms of life can hurt us but little, and the cares of life vex us not at all; in presence of which death shall lose its sting, and the grave its terror; and we, in calm joy, walk all the days of our appointed time, until our great change shall come. All of which we ask in the name of Christ. Amen."

Join together in offering the Lord's Prayer.

RESURRECTION LOVE LESSONS

Motto for the Week: *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which, according to his abundant mercy, hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."* 1 Peter 1:3.

Hymn: *"Christ the Lord is risen today."*—Charles Wesley.

Scripture: Matt. 28:1-10.

Meditation: *RESURRECTION LOVE LESSONS.*

Text: *"And when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary, the Mother of James, brought sweet spices that they might annoint him," etc.* Mark 16:1-7.

On the evening of our Lord's death, Friday, his body was buried. On the next day, the Hebrew Sabbath, our Saturday, by Pilate's authority the stone of the sepulchre was sealed and a military guard posted in front. In the dawn of Sunday an earthquake rent the tomb asunder and an angel heralded the resurrection, and today the whole civilized world stands around that open grave and rejoices in the risen Christ. Let us listen to some of the love lessons we may learn at the open grave of Jesus.

I. Love is early. Human love was "very early" at the tomb. But Jesus and his angels were there still earlier. Human love is a very sweet and precious thing, but it can never keep pace with the Divine love. Our love may be drawn out toward the departed ones, but our love could not

wish them so well nor do so much for them as the Divine love, outrunning our wishes, has already done for them.

II. Love is mighty. "When they looked the stone was rolled away."

"Looking at some trouble lying
In the dark and dread unknown,
We, too, often ask with sighing,
'Who shall roll away the stone?'

"But before the way was ended,
Oft we've had with joy to own,
Angels have from heaven descended,
And have rolled away the stone."

The Divine love is better to us than all our fears. It is mighty in our behalf, and as we go lovingly forward we find the obstacles in the path of duty removed.

III. Love is comforting. "Be not affrighted," was the reassuring word of the heavenly messenger. They were in great sorrow and also now suddenly smitten with fears. How grateful to their hearts must have been these words of comfort, for the message of mighty cheer was added: "He is risen!" Their sorrow would have continued had they found the body there. But the supreme comfort-bearing announcement was made, though not fully comprehended by the women, "He is risen from the dead."

IV. Love sends on errands. "Go." "Go, tell." "Go tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead." This is your Easter commission. We are told by Mark that Mary "went and told them that had been with him as they mourned and wept." Oh, how many mourning and weeping disciples there are still! How much some of Christ's disciples need this message to-day! Go, you, to them quickly,

and tell. Tell of a living, not a dead Christ. Tell of a victorious, not a conquered Christ. It will bring comfort in any trouble, cheer to any sorrowing heart. "For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will bring God with him." His resurrection is our one abiding hope for ourselves and for our departed friends. Let no one fail to hear the message. Go, you, quickly and tell. Obey your Easter commission. It is a love-sent and lovely errand.

V. Love makes promises. "He goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him." The disciples went, and they saw him, as was promised. We are to see him too. "We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." And until that time he is constantly "going before." Do you drag faintly up the mount of temptation? He goeth before. He was "led into the wilderness to be tempted." Do you tread wearily the pathway of poverty? He goeth before. "The Son of Man hath not where to lay his head." Do you walk lonely in the by-way of desertion? He goeth before. "All his disciples forsook him and fled." Do you journey sadly to the grave of a loved one? He goeth before. "Jesus therefore groaning in himself cometh to the grave" of his friend Lazarus. Are you near the valley of the shadow of death? He goeth before. He "became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Because Jesus literally trod every pathway of human sorrow, so now spiritually he goeth before to give triumph in the hour of temptation, comfort in trial, strength in weakness, courage in danger, victory in death. "He goeth before." "There shall ye see him." These were the promises the disciples heard. Like promises are made to us, the first for every earthly experience, the other for the fruition of all our experience when we pass from them unto heaven.

These and such as these are the love lessons we all may learn as, at this Easter season, we tarry at the open grave of our risen Lord. Let us take them into our hearts and joy in them, for to this end were they given.

Prayer: "O God our Father and the Father of our risen Lord, impart to us the spirit of prayer. Our sins we confess and our weaknesses are laid bare in thy sight. The best of us are but sinners saved by grace. Give us, O God, some recognition of thy fatherhood. Look upon us in the face of thine annointed and for his sake own us as thine. We thank thee for the unspeakable gift of the Christ. But for him we had not known thy name nor thy will. For his life, his doctrine and his triumph over death we thank thee. May we become a part of all that was or is. And if it be that we are to suffer with him, help us to remember that the servant cannot hope to be greater than his master. Give us a passion for the welfare of others, and grant unto us a patience, such as we find in thee. We ask it in the name of him who was dead and is alive again, Jesus thy Son. Amen."

Repeat the Lord's Prayer in unison.

EASTER HOPE AND DUTY

Motto for the Week: *"And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away; for it was very great."* Mark 16:4.

Hymn: *"The day of resurrection! Earth tell it out abroad."*—John of Damascus. (8th Century.) Tr. by John M. Neale.

Scripture: Mark 16:1-13.

Meditation: *EASTER HOPE AND DUTY.*

Text: *"And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun."* Mark 16:2.

On the first Easter morning, when our Lord rose from the grave, hope was born into the world. Looking into the empty sepulchre the disciples thought they had lost not only the earthly companionship, but even the sacred body of their beloved Master. They were in utter despair. But the facts were far otherwise than they thought. Christ was not dead, nor was his body stolen. He had risen from the grave, the first-fruits of them that slept, henceforth giving his followers, all of them and through all time, the hope of a blessed immortality. This is a "lively hope,"—that is, a living hope, in contradistinction from a dead hope. The hope kindled by Christ's resurrection is a hope with a living, vital, life-giving power.

I. The Easter hope is a hope of immortality beyond the grave. It is said that the Romans had a practice of light-

ing up their tombs. In the tomb of Tullia, Cicero's daughter, when opened a lamp was found. These lamps could illuminate the catacombs only for a day, and that with but a glimmering light, whose rays were confined to the walls of the catacombs. But the light Christ sheds upon the grave falls upon the vista of eternity, and you can see at this glad Eastertide immortality beyond. What a blessed hope this is!

We all want to live. The thought of death in itself is dreadful. Not merely the fact of dying, but the separations which of necessity are involved make us all shrink from it. But Christ said, "He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live." The Easter hope is a hope of immortality, of a blessed life forevermore. It is also a hope of seeing and being with Jesus. Can we grasp it? Here in this life we talk about Jesus, read about him, sing about him, but go on and on and never see him. But there, when our Easter hope is realized, we shall see him face to face. We shall be like him, dwell in his presence, and never again be out of his sight. No wonder Christians sing so joyously:

"Some day the silver cord will break,
And I no more as now shall sing;
But, O, the joy when I shall wake
Within the palace of the King.
And I shall see Him face to face,
And tell the story—Saved by grace."

II. The Easter hope is also a hope of meeting our loved ones gone before. If he is immortal and they are immortal and we are immortal, then when we come to be with him we shall be with them too,—with our loved ones gone before.

In Venice is a very beautiful monument in the form

of a pyramid. Within that structure are the remains of a little child in the sleep of death. On the door of the strange tomb is the inscription, "Till He come." By the door stands an angel, sculptured from the whitest marble. One hand of the angel rests upon the latch of the door. The other holds a trumpet. The seraph is peering intently into the distant heavens, watching for the first appearance of our coming Lord. Lo! He comes! and every eye doth see him! The latch is uplifted, the door is thrown open, and the angel through his trumpet shouts: "Little sleeper, come forth from thy tomb!" You who mourn over the graves of loved ones, learn of hope that comes to you amid the flowers of Easter,—"It is only till He comes!" We are to see again those dear ones who have slipped away from us into the silent land. We are to hear again those hushed voices, touch those vanished hands, meet and evermore be with those we have loved and lost a while. It is only till He comes!

III. What is the duty of those possessing this hope? It is the same as was Mary's the first Easter morning: "Go quickly and tell." If there is one day in the year which should be more a missionary day than another, we think that day is Easter. We have the good news. Surely we ought to tell it. If our hope of immortality is "a living hope," surely it will breathe, and breathing it will speak helpful, cheering, saving words to others. And it will walk; it will go to the grief-stricken, to the bedside of the sick and carry comfort and help. And it will sing, and it will smile, and it will work. On our birthdays we give gifts. Easter is the birthday of hope. What more natural than that on this natal day of immortality we should give this hope to some one else?

We are told that in Jerusalem on Easter morning there is observed at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre a wonder-

fully solemn and impressive ceremony. It is very early and the building is very dark. Not a ray of light penetrates the gloom to cheer the worshipers who throng the great auditorium, and not a word or sound comes from the multitude. Presently the Patriarch enters. Silently he makes his way past the people and to a curtain, which he lifts, and disappears into the place where they tell us the wounded body of our Lord once lay. The curtain closes behind him with a faint rustle, but still there is no whisper from the throng, no glimmer of light from altar or dome. It is as though the sun were dead, the stars forgotten, and the voice of man hushed forever in the darkness and silence of that rock-hewn tomb.

But suddenly the curtains part once more, and as they sway aside the Patriarch re-enters the church, bearing aloft a blazing torch which he has lighted at the Saviour's empty sepulchre. Its light falls brilliantly upon the strained, expectant faces of the throng and is reflected in thousands of eager, upturned eyes. Almost instantly a dark torch is thrust up to touch the burning one. It flames into light, and then another, and another, and another is brought, and soon hundreds of brilliant lights are blazing where nothing but darkness had been before. The long silent arches ring with glad shouts of "Christ is risen! Christ is risen! The Lord is risen indeed!" And then out into the city streets and along the highways everywhere go the light-bearers, kindling other torches as they run, until soon the whole town and the country about glows with light, all originating at the broken tomb of the risen Christ.

Does not this suggest to us our real lesson of Easter duty? It is to pass the blessing on. It is to kindle the torches of others. It is to try to give this living hope to some one else and to continue doing so until the whole world is full of light,—until every soul shall be illumined

with the beautiful, cheering, holy light caught from the broken grave of Christ, the risen Saviour of the world.

Prayer: "O Thou Prince of Life and First-Begotten of the dead! Who, by thy glorious resurrection, hast overcome death, and opened unto us the gate of everlasting life; enable us, by thy heavenly grace, to walk in newness of life, and to abound in the fruits of righteousness; so that we may at last triumph over death and the grave, and rise in thy likeness, having our vile bodies changed into the fashion of thine own glorious body, who art God over all, blessed forever. Amen."

Unite in offering the Lord's Prayer.

THE BRANDS OF CHRIST

Motto for the Week: *"Whose I am, and whom I serve."* Acts 27:13.

Hymn: *"I am thine, O Lord."*—Fannie J. Crosby.

Scripture: Gal. 6:1-18.

Meditation: *THE BRANDS OF CHRIST.*

Text: *"From henceforth let no man trouble me; for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus."* Gal. 6:17.

Not a few people in Christian lands, and the hostile opposers of all missionary efforts among the unconverted natives in China, have for years been ringing the changes on the charge that all the converts to Christianity among the Chinese are "rice Christians." They have claimed that there are no true converts, but that those who profess conversion, attach themselves to the missionaries and unite with the Christian churches, do it for the loaves and fishes, for the financial profit they get through employment by the missionaries as preachers, teachers and servants. But the way thousands of them stood up for Christ and suffered martyrdom in the Chinese insurrection of the summer of 1900, should silence forever that false criticism.

We trust that "rice Christians," as an epithet of reproach, will never be heard again. These Chinese Christians have fully earned the right to say, with the Apostle Paul: "From henceforth let no one trouble me; for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus." From henceforth they have a right to a recognized standing as

Christians; they have a right to be left untroubled by criticisms and suspicions and reproaches. The cowards are the weak-kneed Christians and the miserable opposers anywhere who have criticised them. From henceforth let no man trouble them; they have a right to freedom from human criticism, for they bear in their bodies the marks of the Lord Jesus.

It was to a credential like this Paul was referring when he wrote to the Galatian Christians. He said: "From henceforth," that is, for the remaining time, during the remainder of my life, "let no man trouble me."

Christians are not often subjected to such stripes and scourgings as Paul endured. But we should have some marks of our attachment to the Lord Jesus.

I. Those marks upon Paul were the marks of ownership by Christ. Such should we bear. The figure Paul uses is "stigmata," "slave-brands." It was the custom in those days of darkness to prick or brand upon the body of a slave some distinctive letter or other mark of ownership, by which he might be deterred from attempting flight, or quickly traced or reclaimed in the event of his escape. More especially was the brand used in the case of theft or crime. To "bear in his body the marks" of any one, was for the branded one to carry about with him everywhere one or both of the two reproaches,—this man is a slave,—this man is a convict. But St. Paul was not ashamed to apply to himself such a figure. He said, "I am the slave, the bond-slave, of Christ, and I am not ashamed to bear about with me the reproach of being a Christian, a Christ's man."

So should we each be Christ's, saying, "Whose I am," as also, "whom I serve." We should be given over to his ownership, having no will of our own but his will.

II. These marks upon Paul were also the marks of a willing consecration. Such marks should we bear. This cry of the Apostle was the cry of absolute self devotion, the magnificent outburst of a heart filled to the overflow with the spirit of impassioned consecration. He has now given himself up to his Master without reserve. But this yielding of himself is not brought about by force, but through affection. It is the result of that master passion, love. The love of Christ constrained him, and he got his "marks" through love's devotion.

III. The marks upon Paul were the marks of faithful servitude. Such marks should we have. A slave once carried a secret message written in punctures on the skin of his head, which had been shaved bare to receive the writing. When the hair was grown again he went unsuspected. The person to whom the message was sent, having shaved the letter-carrier's head, read the message. St. Paul carried in his body the marks of the Master whom he served. The welts made by the Roman lictor's rods, with which he was thrice beaten; the red lines of those almost two hundred stripes which had been laid on him by the Jews, and the scars left by the stones which had bruised and beaten him down, so that he was left for dead; these "marks of the Lord Jesus" he carried with him, the proofs as to whose he was and whom he served. Let us not fail to win them, or shrink from wearing some marks of faithful servitude for Christ.

IV. The marks upon Paul were the marks of honorable scars gained in the conflict. Such marks should we bear. As Pericles said: "It is not gold, precious stones, statues, that adorn a soldier, but a torn buckler, a cracked helmet, a scarred face." The marks gotten in conflict for Christ are honorable marks. As it is a glory to a soldier to have received many wounds and to have many scars gotten

in the defence of his country, so it is a glory for the Christian soldier to have the marks of the Lord Jesus in his body, as of weariness and wounds and scourges and imprisonments for the truth.

Let us remember that entire consecration is the best, to ask Christ to put his brand on us anew, and that there is great reward for bearing the marks of the Lord Jesus.

Prayer: "Father, with thankful and humble hearts we appear before thee. We would thank thee for all the benefits that we have received from thy goodness. It is to thy blessing we owe what success we have found. Every opportunity for doing good; every impulse in the right way; each victory we have gained over ourselves; every thought of thy presence, O Father; every silent but loving glance on the example of our Pattern, thy Son our Lord —all are alike thy gifts to us. Give us strength and wisdom to walk faithfully and joyfully in the way of willing obedience to thy laws, and cheerful trust in thy love. The best thanksgiving we can offer thee is to live according to thy holy will; grant us every day to offer it more perfectly, and to grow in the knowledge of thy will and the love thereof, for evermore; through Christ, our Lord and Saviour. Amen."

Unite in offering the Lord's Prayer.

THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL

Motto for the Week: *"Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, saith the Lord of hosts."* Zech. 4:6.

Hymn: *"Christ for the world we sing."*—Samuel Wolcott.

Scripture: Psalm 19:1-14.

Meditation: *THE POWER OF THE GOSPEL.*

Text: *"All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar's household."* Phil. 4:22.

Because the world is so large, the population so great, and the religion of Christ has not yet become prevalent everywhere, many people grow discouraged, and sometimes almost lose faith in the power of the Gospel. But this feeling is both wrong and without reason. One person's life is short and one person's range of vision is narrow. The Gospel's progress is really steady and strong and mighty. We have abundant reasons for faith in it, much more than Paul had in his day. Yet how marked was his confidence. It is refreshing to our faith to hear him, away back in the beginning of the Church's history, exclaiming, "So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the Gospel to you that are in Rome also; for I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ." Paul went to Rome, preached the Gospel, and even while in prison there won trophies for Christ. Yes, he even won them in Caesar's household, from his kindred or his royal guard or from among those employed in some other sort of service around the palace. And they were so

won that love for other Christians far away leaped the seas and sent them a greeting of affectionate regard. "All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar's household."

Let this fact, that there were saints in Caesar's household, serve to suggest some thoughts concerning this Gospel Paul had to preach.

I. The audacity of the Gospel. Think of the audacity of the Gospel; that it should go right into the heart of the citadel of Satan—into Caesar's household! It seemed an audacious thing that the Gospel should try to make its way at all in Rome. Rome! proud, intelligent, heartless, lustful, wicked Rome! "As much as in me is I am ready to preach the Gospel to you that are at Rome also!" The very mention of that supremely wicked city puts the heroic into these words of the Apostle. The Gospel Paul had to preach was a Gospel that ran counter to all the exalted and lordly feelings of Rome—to the Roman pride of power. Think you, then, that Paul had nothing to fear with his Gospel of humility to preach? And took it no bravery to preach it?

Not only so, but the Gospel which Paul had was in its very nature aggressive. It was a system of practice and belief not in the passive, but in the active voice, imperative mode. It did not wait for resistance or provocation. It delayed for no challenge. It was in open opposition to, and proposed to conquer wrong everywhere, smiting it to the ground. Then, too, Rome was noted not alone for its pride of power, but for its pride of intellect as well. The Gospel Paul had was "to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks foolishness." Paul knew that it was "not of men's wisdom or enticing words." Yet he also knew that the moment it detected intellectual arrogance and pride it would meet it in mortal combat, even though it rested upon the

luxury of imperial patronage and established its strongholds within the very shadow of Caesar's palace.

But this is not all. We are to add to it an understanding of the intolerance of Rome,—intolerance toward other religions. The Romans had an established religion of their own, in which Jupiter and Juno and Cupid and Mars and Mercury, all the gods of mythology, were deemed the deities for human souls to reverence. They hated the religion of the Jews. Christianity was likely to have still stronger opposition. Not only so, but the then reigning Caesar was the worst of all men. He was such a man as cannot be described. The strongest invective has never been able to do his execrable character justice. He was a very monster of iniquity; burner of the city; burner of Christians; murderer of his mother; slayer of his wives; a bloody, conscienceless, diabolical tyrant. He was Nero! Nero was the reigning Caesar, the same Nero who afterwards, as history says, gave Paul a crown of martyrdom by ordering his head severed from his body, just outside the walls of Rome on the road as you go to Ostia. Now, in the face of Roman pride of power; in the face of Roman pride of intellect; in the face of Roman religious intolerance; in the face of Roman wicked practices to be rebuked, and in the face of such a ruling power as Nero and his underlings, truly, did it not mean something for Paul to say, as he did, "As much as in me is I am ready to preach the Gospel to you that are in Rome also; for I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ"? And was there not audacity in a Gospel that would even hope to make converts within the very precincts of the palace?

II. Consider, secondly, the power of the Gospel, that it could win its trophies there, in Caesar's household. Paul went right into the very heart of Rome, a prisoner at that, and won his trophies for the cross in the most hopeless

spot in all the world. The court of Caesar seemed like the very capital throne of Satan. Yet, you will recall, right here it was that Paul planted the truth, established a church, won no mean following to Christ, so that soon afterwards, in writing from Rome this epistle to the Philippian church, he could use the words: "All the saints salute you, chiefly they that are of Caesar's household." Think of it! right in that awful Caesar's household those trophies had been won, and so won that their love reached clear over the sea to greet Christian brethren in Phillippi they had never seen. Paul was ready and not ashamed to preach the Gospel in Rome, because, as he said, he had found out that the Gospel is "power"—"the power of God unto salvation." He believed in the Gospel and he believed in its Author—Christ. The most potent force known to science is dynamite, in its various forms. But Paul had discovered a dynamite long before we did. For this is the very word used here in the Greek. This Gospel, he tells us is the very *dynamite* of God. He believed in it as mighty to the blowing down of delusions and the blowing up of all the strong fortresses of evil. "The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds." Paul had found that the Gospel was power. And those who are opposing it today will find the same thing. The Gospel is love. But love is a tremendous power, and turns the world upside down.

III. Notice, thirdly, the vitality of the Gospel, that it should live and thrive there, in Caesar's household. Some of us think our circumstances are hard and excuse ourselves for not being better Christians on the ground of the difficulties of our situation. But let us think of these Christians in Caesar's household, and be ashamed of our lack of fidelity. No amount of opposition overcame them.

They were Christians in spite of all the evil conditions we have mentioned. But in the fact that they were let us find reasons for faith. The Gospel is a thing of wonderful vitality. It lives and thrives—sometimes seeming to live and thrive better—under persecution. The Gospel has the audacity to go anywhere. It has the power to win souls anywhere. It has the vitality to live and thrive anywhere. Let us believe in it. In spite of all opposition and seeming defeat it is yet to take all people—heathen people, Christian people, all people—and deliver them from the power of darkness and translate them into the Kingdom of Christ. Let us keep in good hope and good heart, and watch and work and pray for the time when it shall be acknowledged by every soul in every land. For that day will surely come. God speed the day!

Prayer: "Our Father, we thank thee that we have a place in thy kingdom and are permitted to work for its advancement. We thank thee that we have the Gospel and that our lives have been blessed by it. Help us to do our part to send the Gospel to the portions of the world to which it has not yet gone. Bless the missionaries in foreign lands. Prepare the way for them and give them favor among the people. May their influence in behalf of thy kingdom receive thy help and thy favor and may the Master's command be obeyed until all lands have heard the story of redeeming grace. We ask in Christ's name. Amen."

Offer the Lords Prayer in unison.

FAG-END RELIGION

Motto for the Week: *"Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life."* John 6:68.

Hymn: *"Lord, I am thine, entirely thine."*—Samuel Davies.

Scripture: Galatians 5:1-26.

Meditation: *FAG-END RELIGION.*

Text: *"I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."* Rom. 12:1..

We have read of two young men, high-minded, manly, and intimate friends, who enlisted together in the army. One of them, an earnest and devoted Christian, often urged his friend to yield his heart and life to Christ. But the friend put him off from time to time. In a bloody battle the friend was sorely wounded. The surgeon who came to him at the temporary hospital told him that he had at most only a few days to live. I am too much of a man to fling the fag-end of my life in the face of the Almighty!"

The young man was wrong, and had a wrong idea of what God would have of him. The only right thing was to yield himself at once, penitent for past delay, to the Saviour who was waiting, longing to be gracious, and to give him a blessed hope of eternal life.

While this is true, yet there was a certain sense of justice in the young man's attitude. God was not waiting to

be just, but waiting to be gracious. Yet, we ought to be impressed with our meanness when we deliberately plan to give only the fag-end of our lives to God. There are a good many people who really wish to get to heaven, who intend to attend to the matter by and by. But they plan to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season first. It is true that the Christian life is the happiest life, that "Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come," but these people do not realize it, and so plan to give God only the fag-end of their lives,—of time, and thought, and energy, and service. They intend to give that, for the sake of safety. But they do not intend to do more than the least that is absolutely necessary.

There is fag-end religion also even in the Church of Christ, men and women giving but the fag-end of their time and energy and interest and support to the Lord and to his work. That is what is the matter with too many of our churches, as also with many a Christian who wonders why he does not experience more joy and comfort in his religion. What is left after all other needs and desires are satisfied, or nearly so, is given to the Lord; what is convenient for him to do he does, what is convenient for him to give, he gives, and nothing more.

These Christians seems to expect the full reward of the redeemed. They are Christians, they would claim, and has not the Lord promised to crown them with the rewards of heaven? A "mansion in the skies," not the fag-end of heaven, but with a reward equal with the best? Yet, they act as if the work of the Lord here on earth can have no claim upon them which they are bound to respect. So when time, or thought, or service, or gifts are asked of them they begin at once to make excuse. The simple fact is, and there is no wisdom in giving it a better name, that

their religion is just fag-end religion. They do not present themselves living sacrifices unto God. They do not regard this as their reasonable service. They are not out and out, through and through Christians. The great, sad question is whether they are really Christians at all. But if they are Christians, they are only fag-end Christians. If they have any religion, it is only fag-end religion.

I. Fag-end religion manifests itself in the grudging way in which many people give their time and thought to Christ and to his cause. They do not put first things first. They do not "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness." They do not love Christ for Christ. They do not put him first in regard, or even in thought. They think of the world first, of money-getting first, of honor-getting first, of pleasure-getting first. Their time and thought are taken up with these things. If Christ gets any of their thought it is the fag-end of their thought. If Christ gets any of their time it is the fag-end of their lives. If they have any religion it is fag-end religion. That is the best that can be said of them or their religion.

II. Fag-end religion manifests itself also in the grudging way in which many people give of their means and energies to Christ and his cause, or the lack of giving these to any appreciable degree. They put energy into their business. But they do not put energy into the "King's business," their "Father's business." They put energy into their secular profession, as lawyers, doctors, teachers, etc., but practically none at all into their profession as Christians.

We know a Sunday-school teacher who was gently chided for being so frequently absent from her class. But she replied: "But, you know, I only have four or five little boys!" Four or five little boys! Four or five immortal souls entrusted to her care! Why, she was only playing

at Sunday-school keeping, like little girls play with their dolls. Who can tell how much depended upon her attitude and faithfulness toward those boys? She may have had a Knox, a Wesley, a Whitfield, or a Moody among those boys. Anyway, she had four or five immortal souls to train for eternity. Well she might have enlisted with all her heart and power in the work. She did not realize it, but she belonged in a class of those who have only fag-end religion.

The same thought might be applied to the way people give to Christ and his cause. Think of the way in which men invest capital in worldly schemes and undertakings. Do many men invest capital in that way for God? No, they give what they can spare without even feeling it.

III. Fag-end religion reveals itself largely through the question of interest and affection. The root of the evil is largely in the heart. Some people can be excused from giving much time or energy or money to Christ, on the ground that they do not have these at their disposal. But every one can give love.

We recall once reading of Ellenthorpe, the hero of the Humber, who had rescued many from drowning. He was on duty on his ship when a cry was heard, "A child overboard!" In an instant he was in the sea, and soon both were on the deck. Next day the mother took the child up to the brave man and said: "This is the gentleman who saved you from the sea; what are you going to give him?" For a moment the child was speechless, not knowing what to answer. But suddenly she put out her hands and said: "If you please, I have nothing else, I will give you a kiss." The rough sailor received many valuable presents, but he declared that the child's kiss was more than all else beside. Why? Because she had given him all she had—her love.

Oh, fag-end Christians, become aware of your real lack. It is a lack of love. Give love and you will give time, and thought, and energy, and money—yourself. "I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies—your whole selves—a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service."

Prayer: "Almighty and most merciful Father, in whom we live and move and have our being, to whose tender compassion we owe our safety in days past, together with all the comforts of this present life, and the hopes of that which is to come; we praise thee, O God, our Creator; unto thee do we give thanks, O God, our exceeding joy, who daily pourest thy benefits upon us. Grant, we beseech thee, that Jesus our Lord, the hope of glory, may be formed in us, in all humility, meekness, patience, contentedness, and absolute surrender of our souls and bodies to thy holy will and pleasure. Leave us not, nor forsake us, O Father, but conduct us safely through all change of our conditions here, in an unchangeable love to thee, and in holy tranquility of mind in thy love to us, till we come to dwell with thee, and rejoice in thee forever. Through Christ, we ask. Amen."

Offer the Lord's Prayer in unison.

THE TRUTH LOVINGLY TOLD

Motto for the Week: *"Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my redeemer."* Psalm 19:14.

Hymn: *"I lay my sins on Jesus."*—Horatius Bonar.

Scripture: James 1:19-27.

Meditation: *THE TRUTH LOVINGLY TOLD.*

Text: *"But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ."* Eph. 4:15.

The manner of saying a thing is often of as much importance as the thing said. In other words, the spirit in which the truth is spoken is about as important as is the utterance of truth at all. Some one has well expressed it: "Apples of gold when taken out of their pictures of silver, and hurled at your head may become the instruments of great pain." The question, therefore, of manner, in speaking the truth, is always of importance.

I. Consider, first, some varied ways in which the truth may be spoken. One may speak the truth with the view of insinuating falsehood. Such an example is evident when the Pharisees of old said of Christ, "This man receiveth sinners." They told the truth but insinuated falsehood. Then, the truth may be spoken in envy. It was so spoken again by the Pharisees when they saw Christ going as a guest to the house of Zaccheus, the publican. They murmured, saying, "That he was gone to be guest with a man

that is a sinner." It was quite true, what they said; but it was the truth spoken in envy that the poor outsider was to be brought within the fold. Then the truth may be spoken in pure malignity. It may be spoken with a definite desire to give pain. Some people get a superficial reputation for honesty through the brutal way in which they blurt out uncomfortable truths. Such an one is likely to say, "Well, I always call things by their right names. There isn't any hypocrisy about me. If I don't like a person I let him know it," and other remarks of that sort. Now, such an one is liable to do an enormous amount of harm.

II. Therefore notice, secondly, the duty and wisdom of speaking the truth in love. The two things are always to go together—truth and love. Truth without love will fail to do what God meant it for. It will repel instead of attract. It is very liable to harm instead of help. The fact is that unless we speak the truth in love we are not speaking the truth at all. Departure from love will involve departure from the truth. Love, affection, is part of the truth. With the love left out the truth is robbed of its essence and is not truth any longer.

On the other hand, love without truth is equally dangerous, flattering the soul into a false peace and sense of security from which there can be only a woeful waking.

It is in combination, only through the union of truth and love, that the highest and best, the God-intended results are brought about.

Someone has well said: "Truth is the stern hard thing, like the bare branches of winter; love is the softener and beautifier, like the green foliage on the summer tree. If you show that you love people you may tell them truths that condemn them, and yet awaken no bitterness; you

may show them how wrong they are and only make them thankful to you for setting them right."

"The portrait is like me, but too good-looking," was the criticism once made to an artist, which called forth the significant reply: "It is the truth, lovingly told."

Prayer: "O Lord of heaven and earth, we are truly sorry for all our misdoings; we utterly renounce whatsoever is contrary to thy will, and here devote ourselves entirely to the obedience thereof. Accept, O most merciful Father, this renewed dedication which we make of ourselves, our bodies, souls, and spirits, unto thee. And grant that we may be able every day to offer up ourselves more sincerely and more cheerfully unto thee; with more pure affection, and hearty devotion and ready disposition to thy service. Preserve in our minds a grateful sense of thy mighty love, that we may follow the doctrine and example of thy Son Jesus Christ. Grant that we may be like him, pure and undefiled, meek and gentle, peacable and patient, contented and thankful. Fulfill unto us all the gracious promises that he hath made unto us. Let it be unto thy servants according to his word. We ask all in his name. Amen."

Unite in the Lord's Prayer.

SPIRITUAL WITCHCRAFT

Motto for the Week: *"Who loved me, and gave himself for me."* Gal. 2:20.

Hymn: *"In the cross of Christ I glory."*—Sir John Bowring.

Scripture: Gal. 3:1-29.

Meditation: *SPIRITUAL WITCHCRAFT.*

Text: *"O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth?"* Gal. 3:1.

Paul's metaphor here used is derived from the popular belief in the power of the "evil eye," the word he employs referring originally to witchery by spells and incantations. The spiritual life of the Galatian churches seemed to Paul as if it had been sucked out of them by the baleful glitter of some evil eye. "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you?" In these words he represents them as enchanted by the arts and snares of their seducing teachers, so far deluded as to act very unlike themselves. That wherein their folly and infatuation appeared was that they did not obey the truth. And several things there were that went to manifest and aggravate their folly. One of these was that they had had the doctrine of the cross plainly preached unto them, while in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper Christ had been "evidently set forth as crucified among them." Another was that they had experienced the workings of the Holy Spirit within their own souls, some of them even to the extent of being

given miraculous powers. He also calls upon them to consider their past and present conduct, and thence to judge whether they were not acting very weakly and unreasonably now. Lastly, he puts them in mind that they had had ministers among them, himself among others, who had come with a divine seal and commission, for they had ministered the Spirit to them and wrought miracles, and appeals to them whether these had taught them that they could be justified by the works of law instead of through faith in Christ. He told them plainly that their great lack was not of knowledge of the truth, but of obedience to the truth they knew.

I. The enchantment of error. "Who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth?" It had affected both their conduct and character. The bewitchment of error always affects men unfavorably in both these respects. They had departed from the truth, relinquished their hold on its doctrines, and now these Galatian Christians were backsliders, both in heart and life. In doing as they had done Paul plainly implies that they had committed very great folly. They had gone backward,—back to the slavery of the ceremonial law, back to the world, back to fleshly lusts back to the service of evil. They were very foolish in surrendering what they did.

II. The fascination of the cross. The fascination of the cross should overcome the power of all other fascinations. It should teach us self-denial in opposition to worldliness, humility as opposed to all personal and intellectual pride, steadfastness in truth in the place of all love of novelty in doctrine, and submission to the will of God. The cross should exercise a magic charm over us and prevent or annul the power of all other fascinations.

Let us live within the circle of the subtle influence of the cross.

"Jesus keep me near the cross,
Bring its scenes before me;
Help me walk from day to day
With its shadow o'er me."

Prayer: "Almighty God, if the eyes of our love may catch but one sight of thy beauty our souls shall be enlarged and comforted. We know thee in the ages, in great breadths of history, in the coming and going of generations; but we want to know thee more closely and tenderly, and say to thee, My God and my Father's God! If we might say this, and feel it all; in and through the power and the grace of Christ, we might shake off the universe itself, and come before thee with hymns that are beyond all words. Now and again dost lift us up with a great lifting; the hills are nothing, the constellations do not stop our sight, we see thee, and the sight makes us glad. May we have some such vision now! Thou knowest the wounding of our heart, the bitterness of our spirit is known to thy love; thou wilt not be too hard upon us, for what is our weakness to thy strength, thou infinite One and Eternal. It would be thy love now, as it ever has, to stoop to us and take us up and warm us at the fire of thine own heart. Accept our love and adoration we pray thee, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen."

Unite in offering the Lord's Prayer.

APPEARANCE AND REALITY

Motto for the Week: *"Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts."* Ps. 51:6.

Hymn: *"Dare to do right, dare to be true."*—G. Lansing Taylor.

Scripture: James 1:16-27.

Meditation: *APPEARANCE AND REALITY.*

Text: *"And King Rehoboam made in their stead brazen shields, and committed them unto the hands of the chief of the guard," etc.* I Kings 14:27, 28.

Rehoboam, when Shishak, king of Egypt, had carried away the treasures of the temple and the shields of pure gold which Solomon had made, made him brazen shields to take their place. He could no longer display the glittering shields of gold on state occasions, but he wanted to seem royal anyway. So he practiced a sort of deception upon himself and upon others. He kept up the appearance of state by causing his armor-bearer to carry before him the cheap brazen shields. "Keeping up apearances" is a species of hypocrisy. Sometimes there is a great difference between appearance and reality. It was a caution we would all do well to heed, that which was uttered by Christ when he said: "Judge not according to the appearance."

We have seen it stated that the last letter written by the late Professor R. A. Proctor begins with these words: " 'Seeing is believing,' says the old proverb; but 'seeing is deceiving' would be nearer the mark. We are deceived al-

most as often, perhaps quite as often as not by what we see." How often is truth the reverse of appearance. How frequently is seeing deceiving. All is not gold that glitters. Not all bright shields are gold shields. "Judge not according to appearance."

I. This is a good exhortation for us to heed in our contact with the natural world. How often in the world of nature seeing is deceiving. We look at the sun and it seems infinitely smaller than the world we live on. We look out upon the landscape and not far in the distance the sky seems to touch the ground. This earth seems to be a flat surface, not a round ball. It seems to be stationary, not whirling around in space. The sun seems to rise every morning and set every evening. The truth in all these cases is exactly the reverse of the appearance. Seeing is deceiving.

II. This is a good exhortation for us to heed in our estimation of the wisdom of men. Bacon, in his essay on Seeming Wise, has shown the folly of judging men's wisdom by appearances. There are many people who want to seem wiser than they are. Scholars in our day schools and Sunday-schools are often afraid to answer a teacher with a confession of ignorance. And "children of a larger growth," to avoid the mortification of saying, "I don't know," look wise. This is a sort of playing the scholar, lest the admission of ignorance would make us seem to be dullards. Rehoboam, when he couldn't display the real thing, the glittering shields of gold upon occasion, wanted to seem royal anyway, and so cut a very sorry figure behind his armor-bearer, who went before him with brazen ones. Using "brass" for keeping up appearances seems thus to have had an early beginning. Quite a good many people think that to "look wise," or in some way to give

the impression that they have real scholarship is about as good as the "real thing."

There is an ancient fable which tells of a jackdaw who put peacock feathers in his tail, and, alighting among a flock of his kind, thought to lord it among them as a bird of superior gifts. But none were deceived, for, despite his borrowed plumes, they knew he was nothing more nor less than a poor simple daw. But jackdaws are not the only creatures that have tried to mask under borrowed plumage. "Judge not according to the appearance." Do not take brass shields for gold.

III. This is a good exhortation for us to heed in our estimation of the happiness of those who do wickedly. "Judge not by the appearance." Do not mistake the brass shield for the gold shield. Perhaps the persons you think of are rich with ill-gotten gains. They may give themselves up to rounds of pleasure and the dissipations of society. They seem to be very happy. But if the individual is doing wrong he is not happy. He may appear that way, but it is only appearance. There are hours when you do not see him, hours when the smile is absent and his heart is gloomy as the tomb. Conscience troubles him. Wicked people may seem to be happy, but deep down in their hearts they are not happy. The truth is the reverse of appearance. Seeing is deceiving.

IV. This is a good exhortation for us to heed in estimating men's success or failure in life. "Judge not by the appearance." Do not mistake the brass shields for gold ones. Many a man has gone down in the battle of life, a business failure, ambition thwarted, hopes blasted. The merciless crowds jeer at him and trample upon him and cry, "Failure! Failure!" while the great God who sees beyond the outward appearance bids the recording angel to

write upon the fallen man's life in letters of gold that shall outshine and outlast the stars: "Sublime success!"

I believe it was the Duke of Wellington who said: "When my diary is published, many statues will come down." He had defeated Napoleon at Waterloo. Immediately he sees soldiers, officers and others eagerly claiming honors to which they were not entitled. They seem to be heroes. The public were deceived, and erected statues to their honor. The Iron Duke allows this to go on, but quietly says: "When my diary appears, when the real facts are stated, these men will not be looked upon as such brilliant successes—many statues will come down." The world today calls many a man a success whom the final judgment will brand the most abject failure. You see statues erected in praise of those who have become rich by wrong doing, or who have attained a high office by lying and fraud. But, as the Duke of Wellington said, "Wait." When heaven's books are opened and the real truth is proclaimed in thunder tones from the throne which sees through all pretense "many statues will come down." As the world judges success is often failure, and failure success.

V. This is a good exhortation for us to heed in forming estimates of men's characters. "Judge not by the appearance." Do not mistake brass for gold. We are not much given to quotations from dead languages, for we are of the same mind as Paul, that all preachers and writers should preach and write in the tongue of the people. But there are two Latin words, *sine cera,* to which we would like to call attention. They are the words from which our English word sincere or sincerity is derived. The words literally mean "without wax," as when a piece of furniture is cut out of the solid wood; neither worm-eaten or defective, so that no holes must be filled with wax and then varnished over to give a false appearance of soundness, but sound

from surface to core. This is to be sincere. As in the wood, so in the man—his sincerity is the source of his strength. How many beautifully varnished characters break under the trial-strain of temptation, just because they are not sincere. Hypocrites are the opposite of sincere people. "Judge not by the appearance." A hypocrite is an actor. He gets behind the brass shield on purpose to make you think he carries one of gold.

There are religious hypocrites as well as other sorts. Let Tennyson describe one for us:

> "With all his conscience and with one eye askew,
> So false he partly took himself for true;
> Whose pious talk,, when most his heart was dry,
> Made wet the crafty crow's-foot round his eye;
> Who never naming God except for gain,
> So never took that useful name in vain;
> Made him his cat's-paw, and the Cross his stool,
> And Christ his bait to trap his dupe and fool;
> Nor deeds of gift, but gifts of grace, he forged,
> And, snake-like, slimed his victim ere he gorged;
> And oft at Bible-meetings, o'er the rest
> Arising, did his holy, oily, best."

In every walk in life look out for the men who carry brass shields, trying to make you think they are gold. Judge not by the outward appearance.

Prayer: "Rest upon us, O Spirit of love, and chase all anger, envy, and bitter grudges from our souls. Be our Comforter in trial, when the billows go over our heads; be our Strength in the hours of weakness, and help us to control the desires of the flesh. Let us grow in faith and love, in hope, patience, and humility. Our hearts lie open before thee; enter now with thy rich gifts, strengthen, establish, settle them. Dwell in them and make them thy temple, so shall we have the pledge of our sonship, and of our salvation; through Christ, our Lord, we ask. Amen."

Offer the Lord's Prayer in unison.

THE SUPREME MOTIVE

Motto for the Week: *"The love of Christ constraineth us."* 2 Cor. 5:14.

Hymn: *"O love that wilt not let me go."*—C. Matheson.

Scripture: Mark 10:13-31.

Meditation: *THE SUPREME MOTIVE.*

Text: *"For my sake."* Mark 10:29.

The real lack of the young ruler was love. As some one has said: "How seldom is Jesus sought for Jesus." "For Christ's sake" is the real Christian motive.

I. "For His sake" is back of all true obedience. It is not hard to do the wishes of one we love. Some people think of religion as a hard, distasteful service. But such know nothing of the delight of being love-impelled. Christ is the Christian's friend. God is his heavenly Father. The Holy Spirit is his Companion and Comforter. The Bride's wishes are not bondage to her husband, nor the husband's to his bride. So do we obey God out of love. Obedience becomes a delight because the heart is in it.

II. "For His sake" is back of the Christian's aspirations toward holiness. Having the love of such a Saviour and Friend we aspire to be more worthy of His love—of the love of one so pure and holy. Love kindles an ambition to be worthy of love. The transforming power of a worthy love has often been felt and seen. "I had a friend," was counted by one as sufficient explanation for his growth in

character and success. When we become conscious that we have Christ for our friend, the motive "for His sake" has a mighty transforming power.

III. "For His sake" is back of each disciple's activity in Christian work. "For my sake, and the gospel's," is the desire of Christ which rings in the Christian's ears. For Jesus' sake, because it is Jesus, and for the gospel's sake, because it is his gospel; here is discovered the motive which has impelled so many of Christ's disciples to heroic effort in his cause. Under this impulse are missions started, do missionaries go, is saving work carried on in every part of the world,—for people high up or low down.

IV. "For His sake" is back of each disciple's patience in suffering. We know that he is love and that all his plans for us are love-prompted. We know that he is wise. He knows the end from the beginning and all his ways for us are wisely directed. We know that he is infinitely strong and will put underneath us his everlasting arms. We, therefore, repose in his love, trust to his infinite wisdom, and rest for support on his hands. How many of the sick, the bereaved, the poor, the lonely, the overworked, the persecuted, the misunderstood have been borne up under the impulse of this supreme motive: It is the Lord's will. His will concerning me is love. I can well afford to trust him. I will bear patiently what he sends, "for his dear sake."

V. "For His sake" is also back of all Christian sacrifice. It is love that inspires to all real sacrifice. "For His sake" money is given to build churches, send missionaries, support hospitals among the heathen. "For His sake" preachers give their time to preaching and teachers to teaching. "For His sake" moves the needle-woman as she sews night and day to support another missionary. "For His sake" the young girl denies herself a coveted pleasure that

she may give to Christ's cause. "For His sake" men, women and children, give, work, plan, go, make sacrifices willingly for Christ and his work in the world.

This motive has not yet full sway in the world, or in our hearts. But it is the one motive underlying all our hope for redeeming this world from the hands of Satan and laying it as a trophy at our Saviour's feet. Let us make it our supreme motive, controlling our thoughts and words and all our acts.

Prayer: "Father in heaven, we feel that we are made for thee and cannot rest until we are folded in thine everlasting arm. Draw us to thyself and tell us thy love. May we have such hearts as will be willing and quick to hear thee. The world is thundering around us, but through all its noise and confusion may we be able to discern the accents of thy voice. Purify us from earthiness and sin that our spirits may blend with thine in blessed fellowship. May we dwell so close to thee that the light of thy face shall stream through us and transfigure us. Calm all our anxious thoughts and fill us with serenity and peace. Then may we come down from the mount of transfiguration to touch the great troubled world with healing hands. In sympathy with it and in service and sacrifice for it may we find our own relief and health and strength and joy. And this we ask in Jesus' name. Amen."

Unite in offering the Lord's Prayer.

SEASONABLE SPEECH

Motto for the Week: *"Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt."* Phil. 4:6.

Hymn: *"Kind words can never die."*—Miss. Hutchinson.

Scripture: James 3:1-18.

Meditation: *SEASONABLE SPEECH.*

Text: *"A word spoken in due season, how good it is."* Prov. 15:23.

There are a few over-pious and over-talkative Christians, but the being too reticent, too reluctant about speaking in the interests of Christ and of His kingdom, is a much more prevalent fault. It is difficult to account for this condition of things. There is no hesitation among us about speaking of other things we account good. We will commend our physician, tell of the pleasant things in art or in nature we have discovered, speak of our social joys, and of our business prospects or hopes; but how dumb we become the moment the matter about which we ought to speak has anything to do concerning religion or religious hopes or fears, consolation, or duties. Yet there is no region in which "a word in season" can prove more truly an apple of gold in a picture of silver. "A word in due season, how good it is!"

I. A word of comfort. Is it not true that we too carefully seal up our lips when our friends are in trouble and sorrow? To be sure, we have no right ruthlessly to in-

trude or thoughtlessly to thrust upon the troubled our attentions. But where one heart is bleeding from such lack of wisdom and tact, a hundred are bleeding for the lack of the good word in season that ought to be spoken.

At the first almost overwhelming suddenness and awfulness of one's grief, silence on the part of friends may be golden; but continued silence only dams up the flow of the soul and drowns it in the backwaters of grief. A kind word of sympathy spoken in due season how good it is! What a relief, what a source of comfort, what an uplifting and inspiring thing it can be!

II. A word of encouragement. We can have no idea, unless we stop and think, how really many people there are in this world in need of encouragement. People bear their burdens, do their work, work out their life-problems almost alone. Children try to be good, but no one seems to know it or notice it, or to speak a single word of appreciation or encouragement. A young boy whose heart was hungry for such a word said to his father, "Papa, you often scold me and tell me when I do wrong, and I am sure I must deserve it; but, Papa, why do you not sometimes tell me when I do please you, and do what you think I ought?"

Another boy we know of told his father of some good feat he had accomplished. The father heard the account in silence, but the boy broke in: "Why don't you say 'Whopee'?"

But boys and girls,—the children,—are not the only people who are hungry for a word of encouragement. Watch for chances, and among the young and old, the rich and poor, among people of all classes and conditions, among even your neighbors and most intimate friends and associates,—yes, in your own family circle,—you may find those in need of and who will greatly appreciate and be inspired by a word of encouragement. They will go on their way

rejoicing, feeling, if not saying, "A word of encouragement spoken in due season, how good it is!"

III. A word of warning. A word of warning may be as faithful and full of love as a word of comfort or of encouragement, and just as much needed. The warnings of the Bible are all as truly love-prompted as the wooings are.

A young man who had been an active Christian grew cold, and began to neglect the church and his spiritual duties. Happening to say, in casual remark to a friend, something about the time of day, and adding that his watch had been losing time lately, that friend, with an earnest look on his face, said: "Have not you been losing time lately?" That was all the friend said, but the reference was understood, and the young man afterwards testified that it was a good word of warning reproof, spoken in due season, and that it was most wholesome and good for him.

IV. A word of wooing. Winning souls is a high art. Nothing within the compass of human endeavor can be compared with it in grandeur of object or remunerative result. And yet there is no other duty, perhaps, from which the average Christian so instinctively shrinks and whose neglect is so widely prevalent. One reason may be that we do not apprehend the simplicity of our opportunities; but another reason certainly is that we fail to measure rightly the value of just "a word in season."

Prayer: "Almighty God, we come to the Saviour's Cross confessing our sin and seeking pardon there. Spare thine anger; loose not against us the bolts of thy wrath, but take us into thy great compassion and sustain us daily by thy tender mercy. For all the joys that come to us we bless thee. For all the little surprises of love that make the day glad; for friendly letters, and loving messages and

graspings of the hand that mean trust and grace; for all encouragement that makes us more hopeful in the time of difficulty we bless thee, and we regard them as hints of thine own inspiration and daily benediction. Strengthen us through the days we have yet to live; show to us the littleness of earth, and the magnitude of the heaven to which we are hastening. We ask through Christ. Amen."

Unite in offering the Lord's Prayer.

GIVING IS GETTING

Motto for the Week: *"Honor the Lord with thy substance."* Prov. 3:9.

Hymn: *"Take my life and let it be."*—Havergal.

Scripture: Phil. 3:1-16.

Meditation: *GIVING IS GETTING.*

Text: *"The liberal soul shall be made fat; and he that watereth shall be watered also himself."* Prov. 11:25.

"Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give unto your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again." Luke 6:38.

Definitely and plainly do these verses, one from the Old Testament and one from the New, tell us the results of liberality. We do not believe these verses as we should, nor act upon them as we should.

"We might all do more than we have done,
And not be a whit the worse;
It never was loving that emptied the heart,
Nor giving that emptied the purse."

I. Giving enlarges the man.

There is a ditty we have somewhere heard that begins thus:

"There was a little man
And he had a little soul."

The reference is not to the physical size of a man. There

are far too many Christians who are little men and have little souls, for which the sole reason is that they have permitted the grace of liberality to be nipped from their characters. They have been held back and stunted in the same way that our Japanese neighbors make dwarfed trees —curiosity trees. The causes of smallness can be included under two facts, the nipping off process, and the repression through lack of soil and nourishment. Whether we have little money or much we all need to cultivate the grace of liberality, if for no other reason to prevent ourselves from becoming "small."

II. Giving pays in kind.

Those who are familiar with Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress" will recall that, when the little company under the lead of Great-heart were entertained at the house of Gaius, there was a good deal of innocent hilarity at the dinner table. The travelers were tired; their appetites were keen; and so much comfort and so much rest, coming at once, put them in the best of spirits.

After a few old-fashioned jokes, and sage attempts at pleasantry, good Mr. Honest gravely announced his intention of propounding a riddle. They were very merry at this time, but of course quite well in hand, and they waited with much respect for the old gentleman's effort. He put it in quaint rhyme thus:

"A man there was, though some did count him mad,
The more he cast away the more he had."

Their most respected host, Greatheart, understood at once that the puzzle was aimed at him, and that everybody lingered anxiously for his reply. He paused a while, however, but whether to guess the answer or to frame the couplet into which he put it, we are not informed. It is not everybody in this world who can make poetry to order. But Gaius finally offered this solution:

"He who bestows his goods upon the poor;
Shall have as much again, and ten times more."

At this juncture, one of Christiana's boys impulsively broke in: "I dare say, sir, I did not think you could have found it out." The genial old gentleman answered: "I have been trained up in this way a great while; nothing teaches like experience; I have learned of my Lord to be kind, and have ever found that I gained thereby." Then he went on to clinch his remark with an apposite verse from Scripture: "There is that scattereth, yet increaseth, and there is what withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty."

It is true, the annunciation of old Honest's riddle. The more we cast away the more we have. The poor people of Glasgow, Scotland, used to say, that "Daniel Dale gave his money by shovelfuls, and God Almighty shoveled it back again." God's shovel was the largest.

Giving is getting. This principle is true in many departments of life. Bodily strength comes from its expenditure, not from its hoarding. Every wise use of a muscle adds to the power of that muscle. An arm carried in a sling for its preservation, stiffens and withers. An arm which swings a great hammer, takes on largeness and vigor with every generous sweep through the air. Keenness of sight and quickness of hearing come from the constant taxing of eye and ear, not from their shielding. An Arab of the desert can see and hear with ten times the acuteness and discrimination of a monk of the convent; because the one has kept in play these senses which the other permitted to remain inactive. When bodily strength of life seems failing, the truest way of its regaining is often by its increasing outlay. It is use, not the possession of any material treasure that gives it the highest value. Merely to have it bears no comparison in pleasureableness with its right employ-

ment. Well filled library shelves are of no benefit to their owner so long as the books remain unopened. But the best volume on those shelves would have an added value to its owner if it were "read to pieces," as one might say. Money gathered and kept for its own sake increases the discontent and cravings of its holder; while money sought and handled for its beneficent uses, gives pleasure and satisfaction to him who employs it.

Give. Give liberally. Give gladly. Give largely.

"For the heart grows rich in giving;
All its wealth is living grain;
Seeds which mildew in the garner,
Scattered, fill with gold the plain."

Prayer: "O Lord God, our Father, we praise and bless thy name for mercies innumerable; for life, for peace, for health, for safety, for home, for food, for clothing, for friends, for joy, for purpose to do right, for sleep that rests, for opportunity, and for all that makes us what we are from day to day. We confess our unworthiness of all, and ask thee to make us nobler, truer, stronger. Temptation is often fierce. We yield too many times, and sometimes when we fain would not. Help us to remember our proneness to sin and thy ever present power to aid.

We beseech thee bless us in the work we do from day to day. We consecrate to thee our power to work and ask thee to accept us in our devotion of all we are to thee. Bless all who work for thee in any way and wherever they may be. Hear us, O Lord, and direct us ever to Thy glory and for thy great name's sake. Amen."

Repeat the Lord's Prayer in unison.

THE MINISTRY OF CHILDREN

Motto for the Week: *"Take this child away and nurse it for me and I will give thee thy wages."* Ex. 2:9.

Hymn: *"I think when I read that sweet story of old."* —J. Luke. Or, *"There's a Friend for little children."*— A. Midlane.

Scripture: Matt. 19:13-30.

Meditation: *THE MINISTRY OF CHILDREN.*

Text: *"And a little child shall lead them."* Isa. 11:6.

Quite commonly throughout Christian lands Children's Day is celebrated on the second Sunday in June. It is a glad day, full of the odor of flowers, the singing of birds and the sweet sound of the voices of innumerable children. It is also a day full of suggestive instruction for old and young alike. It will be well if in our homes at this time we speak of the children, confer in regard to their interests, pray for God's blessings upon them, and, as older people, open our hearts to the lessons we may learn from them.

God has many ministers besides those that bear that distinctive name. The babbling brook, the deep blue sea, the starry firmament, the many-tinted flowers of the field, the birds of the air, all speak to our hearts about the glory and majesty, the power and the love of God. Children, too, are his "ministers," and it is especially of them we will now think. Children teach us many lessons in many ways and influence us greatly.

I. They purify. There is a sweet fragrance streaming forth from the life of every little child, which makes us older people long to get back to the sweetness, the simplicity, the teachableness, the purity of our days of early youth and childhood. They preach to us, not so much by their lips as by their innocence.

II. They elevate. Children appeal to the highest and best instincts of our nature. They take our thoughts away from things sordid or low, and lift us to high thinking and noble acting.

III. They stir. They arouse our laggard wills and move us to better living. They make us careful of conduct that is likely to be reproduced in them, and stimulate our finer qualities. They inspire us with hope, rouse us to wholesome sacrifice, impel us to industry and set us forward in ways of physical, moral and spiritual well being.

IV. They instruct. God speaks to us through them. He taught Eli by young Samuel. He used the little boy to instruct the aged priest. And has not God, in like manner, often spoken since Eli's days to those of riper years through the lips of children? He has manifested himself through a child's prayers, through a child's questions, through a child's piety, through a child's example. He has taken infantile lips and filled them with strange and startling messages from himself.

V. They console. No one can over-estimate the amount of blessing children have brought to hearts and homes in the way of taking our minds off our troubles and giving the cheer and consolation of a sweet and clinging love. In no direction is their ministry more marked than in healing the wounds of bereavement and sorrow.

VI. They reconcile. They not only console our sorrow, but they most powerfully reconcile us to life's hard-

ships. How many a mother struggles against hardship and poverty, toils day and night for her little ones, and yet "thinks her lot divine" because she has them to toil for! How many a father, returning home from the labor and cares of the day has had his heart cheered and strengthened by the prattle of his little children! Thus they remove our thoughts from self. They say so many kind and sympathetic things that we are cheated of weary care and are reconciled to our lot in life.

VII. They gladden. Children are the flowers of life, the poetry of life, the sunshine of life. Their presence is always gladdening. Their loveliness surprises us into a pure and abounding joy. How poor, how dismal, how uninviting the world would appear were there no children in it.

VIII. They soften and make us tender. Their helplessness appeals to us so that we relax our hardness and become tender. No mother's heart is ever just the same after having clasped her own child to her breast. No father can feel the touch of a tiny hand without being softened and made more gentle. The birth of a dear child binds the hearts of the parents more closely and tenderly together, and all who come in contact with the little one are made more kindly and affectionate and gentle.

IX. They lead Godward. "A little child shall lead them." How innumerable the instances and how remarkable the ways in which parents and friends have been brought to God through the influence of little children! Let us open our eyes to see what children may become to us, as well as what we ought to be to them; for in a suitable and reverent sense children are the salvation of the race; their ministry the most powerful ministry for good.

Prayer: "O Lord, for all family life and love and comfort we bless thee; for the laughter of children, for the mer-

riment that knows no anxiety, for all the hope and cheer and gladness of household song, for the table spread in the wilderness, for the cup which we have not yet exhausted, we bless the Lord with a warm heart and a loud voice. Thou hast filled the right hand with plentifulness, and in our left hand is abundance, for our head is the diadem of grace. Blessing and honor, and glory and power, and thanksgiving louder than the roar of seas, be unto the living Father, the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, for all his compassion and all his protections. Amen."

Join in offering the Lord's Prayer.

PRESENT TENSE CHRISTIANITY

Motto for the Week: *"Now are we the sons of God."* I John 3:2.

Hymn: *"Behold what wondrous grace."*—Isaac Watts.

Scripture: I John 3:1-24.

Meditation: *PRESENT TENSE CHRISTIANITY.*

Text: *"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life."* John 3:36.

It would be a great gain for the world if all men could come to realize how truly the religion of Christ is a religion of the present, for today, this very working, struggling, sinning, grace-demanding day. The Bible is a present tense book. "I am with you," says Christ. "My peace give I unto you." "The blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth from all sin"—not will cleanse, but now cleanseth, makes clean at this very moment. "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Not, he will strengthen me for some future testings, but he is strengthening me today, now, in the trials, or duties or temptations I am meeting at this moment.

The Christianity of Christ is a present tense Christianity.

I. The day of salvation is in the present tense. The Bible nowhere says for us to accept of Christ tomorrow. It says "Today if ye will hear his voice harden not your hearts." It says "Now is the accepted time, behold, now is the day of salvation." There is no salvation in the past

or future tense. All the benefits of Christ's redemption are available for you now, and, if the offer of salvation is made to you today you have no right to even think of delaying acceptance until tomorrow.

II. Eternal life is in the present tense. "He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life." In a true and deep sense, all who believe have already entered upon the Eternal state. They have stepped across the frontier life into the glorious state of being in which the changes of this mortal existence cannot affect the permanence of their life of blessedness.

III. Heaven is in the present tense. The Bible does tell us of heaven to come, but Christ made it plain that we do not have to wait till after we die for heaven to begin with us. Said he, "The kingdom of God is within you." All the way to heaven is heaven. It is a present heaven the Christian enjoys, an inner heaven in the heart. It is the same heaven in both worlds. The only difference is one of degree. "Lay hold on eternal life." It is something for us to get hold of now. It is a thing of the future, but it is a thing of the present too, and even the part of it which is future can be so realized and grasped by faith as to be actually enjoyed while we are here.

IV. Duty is in the present tense. No man ever did or can do today's duties tomorrow. "Work while it is called today; the night cometh when no man can work." All duty is in today, and what you do for your own soul, what you do for other souls, and what you do for the world, is done or left undone in today.

V. The possibilities of life are in the present tense. Do you think you will grasp your ideals, attain your possibilities some tomorrow? No, you will not. Your tomorrow will be the result of your today. Are you grasping your ideals today? Are you reaching your possibilities to-

day? Your tomorrow will be of the structure of today's building.

Prayer: "O Lord God, Father and Friend, hear the prayer we offer thee in reverent spirit and sincerest love. We have chosen Jesus Christ as him to whom we will conform our lives. Aid us, we beseech thee, as we strive to live the strong, earnest, faithful, courageous life that he lived in the midst of foes. May our lips be always filled with praises to him. Let the Hosanna song we sing today be always the same. Let us never forget him and his mighty love. May we never crucify him by lives that deny the grace and power of his salvation. Oh, keep us true. Make us loyal to the truth. May our faith be so abiding that it will keep us ever patient, ever hopeful, ever able to say, Thy will be done. Sometimes the way is dark and rough, and we cannot understand why we must walk it. Help us to go on just the same, knowing that thou wilt interpret for us and make all things plain for us in thine own good time. We join the songs of adoration which the world will sing today, 'Hosanna, thou art the King of glory, O Christ.' So we offer to thee, O Father, our praises. Accept them, we beseech thee, in the name and for the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

Unite in offering the Lord's Prayer.

SPIRITUAL ATTENTIVENESS

Motto for the Week: *"My meditation of him shall be sweet."* Psalm 104:34.

Hymn: *"O Holy Saviour, Friend Unseen."*—Charlotte Elliott.

Scripture: Exodus 3:1-22.

Text: *"And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight."* Ex. 3:3.

That in these busy, hurrying times we need to be stirred afresh to the blessed exercise of fellowship with God, few Christians will deny. That fellowship with God is a blessed exercise all who know anything at all about Christian experience will agree. "It is good for me to draw near to God," is a common sentiment of Christians; but the drawing near and the living near is not nearly so common as an attainment. The fact that we can draw near to God implies the fact also that it is possible to live at a distance from God, which too many among even professed Christians do.

Moses at the "mountain of God" was an instance of a man within reach of a great spiritual opportunity. What he saw was a burning bush, but unconsumed. Moved by a spirit of reasonable inquisitiveness, he said, "I will now turn aside and see this great sight; why the bush is not burnt." When he paused in his going, and bent his steps in the direction of the wonder, there came to him the blessing

of a rich revelation. Indeed, he met Jehovah, who spoke to him, face to face.

It was an almost similar experience the Apostle John had on Patmos. Being "in the spirit on the Lord's Day," he heard a voice behind him. It was a trumpet-like voice, proclaiming: "I am Alpha and Omega." John "turned to see" the voice that spake with him, and at once there followed a still ampler message and a richer blessing.

What was true of Moses and what was true of John is true of men always,—they get visions of God and the richest spiritual blessings only as they give themselves pause in the hurry of life, and "turn aside to see." God intimates in some way that he would speak with us, and when he does, that moment is our moment of spiritual opportunity. It is our duty to turn aside to see. It is our duty to place ourselves in the full attitude of attention. Like Samuel upon hearing the voice, we should say at once, "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth."

I. Turn aside to attend upon a spiritual mood or impulse. Moses did not thoughtlessly or indifferently hasten on, satisfied with the mere glimpses he got of the burning bush. No; he said, "I will turn aside, and see." Many get a glimpse of spiritual possibilities,—they fall into the mood of spiritual thoughtfulness; but they deliberately shake it off, and say to the wooing Spirit of God, "Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season I will call for thee." That is doing despite unto the Spirit of Grace. That is hurrying by the burning bush. That is failing to heed God's beckoning call. That is the secret why many, brought up in Christian homes and churches and communities, are not Christians. This same lack of spiritual attentiveness, too, is the reason why many Christians are weak in faith, lukewarm in love and powerless for serv-

ice. God has many things to say to those who will come near enough to him to hear his voice, or who will be still long enough to listen. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him." The term here rendered "secret" is in the Hebrew tongue "a whisper." When an humble and teachable soul is near to God, he often tells it a secret. He whispers in the attentive Christian's ear some sweet word of promise or of love which no one else can hear, perhaps which no one else could understand. Turn aside to see; pause long enough to find out the meaning of the intimation God has given.

II. Turn aside to attend upon what God says to you in his Word. This is an age of secularity. The path of life leads along the well-beaten track of worldliness. It takes some grit for a busily engaged man to say to himself: "I will now turn aside from the paths of greed and money-getting and secularity, and see some great thing." The Bible is a letter sent to him, but he does not open it,—or thus far he has neglected it. He has been rushing along, practically heedless of what God says; but this is a very narrow-minded and foolish way in which to live. It is a happy day for any man when he comes to a distinct decision to deflect from his accustomed way of worldliness and listen to God speak. It is important, too, for all Christians to remember that time taken for the study of God's messages is not time lost. No one is the loser by the time he spends with the Bible. In the largest sense "Godliness is profitable unto all things." It pays us to turn aside and see God, and to hear what he has to say to us in his blessed Book. Turn aside to hear and to meditate.

III. Turn aside to see and learn the meaning of God's providential dealings. At first the burning bush seemed only a mysterious but meaningless happening; but it was far from that. Moses turned aside to see and at once

found that there was transcendent meaning in it, and a most important message for him. It was when God saw that he turned aside to see and hear, his attention arrested, that he spoke to him. "Be still, and know that I am God." Do you get still enough before God to permit him to tell you the meaning of his providential dealings with you? There is much you might know which you do not, many mysteries that would be explained to you if you only would be still before God, would turn aside to see and to hear what he has to say to you through his providential dealings.

God speaks to us when we are still. In the busy part of the day, in London, so great is the rush along the Strand that the tolling of the clock in St. Paul's Cathedral, as it strikes the hours, is not heard. People could hear it if they would stop and listen. Many of us live in such a rush and hurry that we do not hear God speak. Yet he would speak to us, and messages of the sweetest and most meaningful import, if we would give ourselves pause in life, and be in an attitude to heed what he says.

Being with God shows. Men could tell that Moses had held fellowship with him. And being with God gives power. Moses went from the presence of God to work wonders in his name. Quiet listening to God is no hindrance to making active accomplishment in life.

Being with God also gives a sense of zest and security. To go conscious that God is with us gives mighty inspiration to life. Moses had God consciously with him. No wonder he went so well on God's errands. "I will go in the strength of the Lord God."

Prayer: "Oh God our Father, we thy children lift our voices to thee in supplication and in thanksgiving for thy manifold mercies. Our supplications are that we may live more nearly in accordance with thy will as expressed

for us in thy holy Word. There is the law for good life. There is the record of thy will. We would be what thou wouldst have us, but we cannot except thou shalt graciously grant to us day by day a real manifestation of thyself. Forgive us for all our failures to do what we should do. We ask for strength against our weaknesses. Only divine strength will enable us to overcome the weakness which belongs to human nature. But that strength thou art able to give, for it has been written that thy strength is made perfect in our weakness. The weaker we are, the more perfect can thy strength be in us. Help us where we need help, we thus beseech thee, oh our God. Hear us, and answer us in peace, if it be thy will, we ask, for the sake of Christ. Amen."

Unite in offering the Lord's Prayer.

SOME THOUGHTS FOR THE FOURTH OF JULY

Motto for the Week: *"Pray for the peace of Jerusalem, they shall prosper that love thee."* Ps. 122:6.

Hymn: *"My country 'tis of thee."*—Samuel T. Smith.

Scripture: Psalm 35:1-22.

Meditation: *SOME THOUGHTS FOR THE FOURTH OF JULY.*

Text: *"Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord; and the people whom he has chosen for his own inheritance."* Psalm 33:12.

God has given us a pleasant land, a very fruitful land, a land blessed with intelligence, liberty and Christian faith. This country of ours is a goodly heritage (Psalm 16:6). Its providential beginning, splendid history, varied and expansive domain, glorious institutions, beautiful form of government and exalted national spirit make every patriotic citizen proud of our country and of our flag. We have every reason to be proud. Our victories in war and our triumphs in peace have been worthy of our civilization. With all our defects and sins our progress, growth, philanthropy, popular education, citizenship, civic righteousness, and love of liberty place us high among the nations of the earth. We have a vast domain of which we may well feel proud, and also a national spirit which is worthy to make us rejoice,—a spirit which represents love of freedom and sympathy for the oppressed who are struggling for liberty

and justice in all lands, while a sense of fraternity binds every part of our land, North and South, East and West, in closest union.

We believe it was wise forethought in our fathers which led them to set apart Independence Day for yearly observance, when the attention of all our people would be turned toward a review of our past history and toward a consideration of questions bearing upon our future national interests and welfare.

I. One of the facts the day should fix in our minds is that the founders of our Republic recognized God. The last sentence of the Declaration of Independence reads: "And for the support of this declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge," etc. When the Continental Congress was organized, Benjamin Franklin, although not a church member, suggested that the sessions be opened with prayer. At Valley Forge, he who led our little army was found in the stillness of midnight on his knees, supplicating the God of nations to save his country which lay bleeding. In that struggle for independence the colonies put their trust in Him who had guided another nation with a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night. Heaven forbid that we should ever abandon the faith of our fathers! "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord."

II. We may well learn also from this day something of the power of woman's influence. When Great Britain placed a tax on silk, the women of America said, "We will wear no silk." When a tax was placed on tea, they said, "We will drink no tea." While history speaks of the Warrens and the Jaspers let it not fail to mention also the women of the Revolution. And let us not forget the influence of women today upon the nation's welfare. Some one says: "Here sits a mother by a cradle in which lies a

child one year old. She is rocking not one year, but more! She is rocking five years, ten years, fifty years, eternity!" "She who rocks the cradle rules the world." John Randolph said that he would have been an infidel but for a praying mother. What an infinite debt this nation owes to its multitudes, in noble succession, of praying mothers!

III. We may learn also from Independence Day the necessity for putting one's heart into one's work. The signers of the Declaration of Independence pledged "their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor,"—all they had they threw into that movement for independence. In the war England tried to bribe American generals to stop the conflict. General Reed, of Pennsylvania, replied: "I am not worth purchasing, but poor as I am, the king of Great Britain is not rich enough to buy me." Such was the prevailing sentiment. The hearts of the people were in that struggle; and heart-enlistment is the secret of effective work always. Let us keep heart-enlisted for our nation's welfare and in all that will promote righteousness and justice and godliness in our midst.

IV. Let us learn, lastly, the importance of committing one's self publicly to the support of right principles. Fifty-six men put their names on the Declaration of Independence. Placing a name there meant victory or death. Had they not committed themselves thus publicly they would have been more likely to waver before the war ceased. But after the names were down there was no retreat. As one of them said: "We must either hang together or hang separately." Their names had been published to the world as supporters of the Declaration of Independence, and this public avowal helped them to keep firm during the seven years' war.

When Sherman was about to set out on his march to the sea he destroyed all the railroads and bridges connect-

ing with the North and the authorities at Washington. When his army began to move he sent a telegram to the national capital and then cut the wires. There was no retreat now. He was fully committed to the expedition. The world was watching him. Nothing remained for that army but to go ahead, and go ahead it did until the flashing of its bayonets mingled with the glimmering of the spires of old Savannah.

There was divine insight in Christ's requirement that Christians should confess him, commit themselves to him publicly. "He that confesseth me before men, him will I confess before my Father and the holy angels." Such public confession is not only a command, but it is a great source of strength. Having made that confession publicly you find it less difficult to live right. Public avowal in itself helps you to be true to the Redeemer. Do not try to be a Christian secretly. To the whole world let it be plain that you intend to be a Christian. Sever thus all connection with the sinful past; cut off all chance of retreat; and then go steadily forward until you behold brightly gleaming the spires of that eternal city whose builder and maker is God. And may God hasten the day when our whole nation shall be made up of openly avowed and consecrated Christians—when we shall be a people whose God is the Lord!

Prayer: "For praying mothers and godly fathers who gave us an inheritance of righteous blood, and who trained us to reverence sacred things, we give thee thanks, O Lord. For children with their love, whom we have received as a heritage of the Lord, we return thanks. For the goodness and mercy which have followed us all the days of our lives; for prayers answered, and burdens removed; for deliverance and guidance; for precious memories; for blessed hopes, O Lord, we give thee our grateful thanks. For

citizenship in a land of liberty and promise; for the privileges of the house of God; for the blessings of comfortable and happy homes; for the loved ones; for helpful friendship; for the esteem of good men; for the daily life, rich in opportunity and service; for all that we are and have and enjoy, O Lord, we praise thy Holy Name. For the unspeakable gift of thy Son, Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord; for the indwelling and witness of thy Holy Spirit; for the hope of eternal life in our Father's House of many mansions; for thyself—for what thou art, O Lord, we humbly thank thee. Amen."

Offer the Lord's Prayer in unison.

THE CHRISTIAN'S GOODLY HERITAGE

Motto for the Week: *"God is the strength of my heart, and my portion forever."* Psalm 72:26.

Hymn: *"For thee, O dear, dear country."*—Bernard of Cluny.

Scripture: Psalm 16:1-11.

Meditation: *THE CHRISTIAN'S GOODLY HERITAGE.*

Text: *"The lines are fallen to me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage."* Psalm 16:6.

This Psalm is the expression of a devout believer's faith in God and satisfaction with his lot. It begins with prayer, implies trouble, and abounds with holy confidence. It closes with songs of assurance as to present and ultimate safety and blessedness. It is plainly Messianic, as quoted by Peter, Acts 2:25-31, and by Paul, Acts 13:35-38, yet it is such an expression of faith and confidence as suited the feelings of David and as it is the privilege of every true Christian today to utter.

From its title, "Michtam of David," as well as from its intrinsic value, it has been called The Golden Psalm. Spurgeon calls it The Psalm of the Precious Secret, on account of the value and depth of its doctrinal and spiritual import.

Selecting from the many thoughts suggested, let us dwell more particularly upon the one assigned by our topic—the Christian's goodly heritage. "The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage."

The land of Canaan, as we know, was divided by lot, and was thus apportioned to the various tribes of Israel. Of course it would follow that there would be a great diversity in the heritages possessed. Some, as in the case of Dan and Issacher and Manasseh, would be more pleasant and fertile than others. We can imagine those with the choicest gratefully adopting the sentiments David expressed when he said: "The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places, yea, I have a goodly heritage." We have no doubt that the form of his language came from the way the land was divided, by "lot" and measured off by ropes and "lines"; but what David was thinking of so thankfully was God's great goodness to him. David believed in an overruling Providence. He believed that God had fixed the bounds of his abode, and his possessions. More than that, he was—what many of us are not—satisfied with all the Divine appointments. He reviewed God's dealings with him from a sheepfold to a palace, from being a shepherd to being a king. But cannot every Christian say as much? God has rescued us from the kingdom of darkness, from the thralldom of slavery to sin, and has translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son. He has made us kings and priests. He has adopted us into his own family, and given us a right to an everlasting inheritance in the land and life immortal.

Think of the Christian's goodly heritage.

I. First, in temporal blessing. "Godliness is profitable." It blesses us now. It has promise of "the life that now is," as well as of "that which is to come." As a rule Christian people are prosperous. They live in better houses, have better health, have larger and happier families, have more friends, and have more of the riches of the respect of others and of personal contentment than do those who are not Christians. Godliness blesses men in every state of

life. It exalts the humble. It prospers the toiler. It helps up those born to adversity.

If we will look upon the things that we have rather than upon the things we have not, no one of us can fail to find much that calls for gratitude. We have a goodly heritage in health, in friends, in the fact of living in a Christian community. This expression of the Psalmist is often used by the patriot in speaking of his country. We have a goodly heritage in a country where liberty abounds, and yet where anarchy is restrained, where men are equal, and yet where each one can press forward to the highest attainments and positions. All our people share in these privileges, and yet to the Christian they are a cause of special gratitude to God.

II. Think, secondly, of the Christian's goodly heritage in spiritual blessings. What a heritage we have in God's Word. How the Psalmist exulted in the possession of God's Word; and how he delighted himself in its pages! The Christian has the completed Bible as his heritage. Then, too, he has a goodly heritage in the ordinances of God's house. Here he receives spiritual nourishment and sustenance for his soul. Here he receives new courage to continue the battle against sin, fellowship with saints who cherish a like precious faith with himself, and actual strength to do well in the cause of his Master. But the Christian's best heritage is in God himself. God's blessing is upon the righteous. It is with them, around them, within them. They have life and joy and hope. They have pardon, peace, and power—"forgiving mercies, adopting love, and sanctifying grace." They have the blessings of a benign Providence, heavenly care, and heirship to life eternal.

III. This suggests our last thought—namely of the Christian's goodly heritage of prospective glory. Some one has well expressed the Christian's good estate. "He has

grace in possession and glory in reserve." The Christian is a sojourner. He is a traveler. He is enjoying the scenes of a foreign clime. But his richest possessions are at home. His real investments are in his native land. The Christian is looking toward and for heaven. He is hoping, expecting, yea, seeing its glories dimly outlined and foreshadowed. He is having now the earnest, the first-fruits, the foretaste of bliss immortal. By the temporal blessings he receives, by the spiritual blessings he enjoys, and by the large hope he indulges of prospective glory at God's right hand, the Christian has a right to say: "The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage."

Prayer: "Almighty God, thy claim upon our worship is unceasing, for thy mercy, like thy majesty, endureth forever. Thou dost never withhold thine hand from giving us good gifts. As thou hast made us in thine own image and likeness, so thou dost specially reveal thyself unto us day by day, appeasing our hunger with bread from heaven, and quenching our thirst with water out of the river of God. Oftentimes have we said concerning thy Son: 'We will not have this Man to reign over us.' But when we have tasted the bitterness of sin, and have realized our own helplessness, when by the ministry of thy Holy Spirit we have come to understand somewhat of thine own holiness and mercy and love, our heart's desire has been that Jesus might sit upon the throne of our love and rule our whole life. Amen."

Offer together the Lord's Prayer.

LIFE IN TRUE PROPORTION

Motto for the Week: *"Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness."* Matt. 6:33.

Hymn: *"Jerusalem, my happy home."*—J. Montgomery.

Scripture: 1 Kings 5:1-18.

Meditation: *LIFE IN TRUE PROPORTION.*

Text: *"A month they were in Lebanon, and two months at home."* I Kings 5:14.

The great work which Solomon was raised up to do was the building of the temple. His wealth and wisdom were given him to qualify him for that. In this chapter we have an account of the preparations he made for that and his other buildings. Gold and silver his father had prepared in abundance, but timber and stones he must get ready, and about these we see him treating with Hiram, king of Tyre.

Palestine was then, though probably not to the extent that it is now, practically a timberless land. The houses in Jerusalem and Hebron and most of the villages of Palestine, as we see them today, are built almost entirely without wood. Even the ceilings are stone-arched, because of the scarcity of timber large enough and strong enough for beams. But much wood was used in erecting the temple, and in Solomon's palace and other buildings. This timber was brought from the Lebanon mountains, in the north, floated to Joppa on rafts, and carried from there to Jerusalem. The chapter in which the account we are studying is

found, tells of the amicable correspondence between Solomon and Hiram, King of Tyre.

Tyre was a famous trading city that lay close upon the sea near the northern border of Palestine. Its inhabitants seem never to have been at enmity with Israel, and David and Hiram lived happily as neighbors. Indeed, it is said of Hiram that he was "ever a lover of David." We have reason to believe that he was a worshipper of the true God, and had himself renounced, though he could not reform, the idolatry of the city.

But some of the workmen employed, especially in the more easy and honorable part of the labor, as felling the cedars and helping to square them, were Israelites. They worked in conjunction with Hiram's servants. They were in number thirty thousand, called to this special work by Solomon. But he did not require them to spend all their time in the mountains of Lebanon or in work for him and his people. He employed only ten thousand at a time, so that for one month's work they had two month's vacation both for rest and for the dispatch of their own affairs at home.

Though this whole narrative is very interesting, let us follow it no further now, but seek to learn two or three practical lessons from this one incidental statement: "A month they were in Lebanon and two months at home." Let it suggest to us the thought of the true emphasis of life, or life in its true proportion.

I. There is a lesson for us here, we think, concerning the importance of home and family. "Two months at home." Palestine was where home was, and the claims of the family demanded one month for Lebanon and two months at home. As some one has well said: "The home is the true unit of value; the family, not the individual. The strong nations today are the nations with homes. The

love of home is the strongest and most lasting of all pure passions." Good homes are the hope of the world. Everything that is good in the church or in society is first planted and tended and shielded and nurtured in good homes. The Church began in a godly home, and it will continue best and prosper most where home-life is the strongest and purest. The strength, the perpetuity, the destiny of our own and of every other nation rests upon the homes established in accordance with the law of God, guarded by parental authority and sanctified by parentl love. "Two months at home." Life is not in true proportion that does not take into full account the claims of home and family. The man without a home is not half a man, and the man who does not do his duty toward home is worse than an infidel.

II. Again, there is a lesson, we think, in this incident concerning also the importance of the claims of country and patriotism. Palestine was the fatherland to these Israelities, and the claim of country demanded one month for Lebanon but two months for home. Solomon inaugurated a policy of expansion and there was a risk that the wider world, and this foreign work, would lure the Hebrew away from the land of promise. So with us; work today, money-making, the excitements of speculation, tend to undermine our sense of duty to our country. No country can afford to lose her ablest citizens. The despot and the demagogue get their chance when the good men are busy with the cedars of Lebanon, instead of casting their ballots in Jerusalem. The true Israelite of today, the one who would serve God and his fellow-men, must be true to home and true also to country and all the claims of the most exalted patriotism. He must be willing, if need be, to make greater sacrifices for his country's good.

III. Once more, there is a lesson in this incident, we think, concerning the importance of the claims upon us of

religion and the Kingdom of God. Palestine was not only home and country to those Lebanon workers, but it was also the seat of national faith. Those cedars they were cutting were for the temple, for the sanctuary of God. Christianity localizes religion. He who has no home ceases to be human; he who has no country ceases to be civilized; he who has no church ceases to be religious. Christianity does not claim that for its religion a man should give up labor, home and citizenship. On the contrary, it raises these by associating them with itself. It was this of which the Hebrew Lebanon worker was reminded when he said: "One month here, and two months at home." It was this same lesson Christ was teaching when he said: "Man cannot live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." The only way in which we can obey God and act wisely is to do exactly what he tells us, and put first things first. "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness." Be careful about the emphasis of life. Be careful to live it in true proportion, giving God the first place; then follow his requirements. That will bring success in every department of life.

Prayer: "O Lord Jesus Christ, we adore thee as thyself, God over all blessed for evermore. Without thee, the Eternal Word, was not anything made that hath been made. Help us, we pray thee, to realize that thou art our Saviour. and also the Maker and Lord of all nature. Open thou our eyes, these summer days, to behold thee, in the mountains and hills, in all trees and flowers; in the rivers and waterfalls; in the clouds and skies and seas; in sun, moon and stars. Open our ears to hear thee in the songs of birds, in the music of the winds, in the many breaking waves of the ocean, the roll of the thunder; as well as in the voices of men and women. Above all, Lord Jesus, speak thou to

our hearts in thy Word which thou hast exalted above all thy name; then shall we, communing with nature, commune with thee, nature's Creator and Lord. Thus make all thy people, and all people that on earth do dwell, rejoice that thou, Lord Jesus Christ, omnipotent, reignest. King of kings, Lord of lords, reign, imperially reign in us; that so we may be loyal in life as well as in prayer to thee, who with the Father and the Holy Spirit livest and rulest in glory everlasting. Amen."

Unite in the Lord's Prayer.

GLADNESS IN GOD'S REIGN

Motto for the Week: *"My grace is sufficient for thee."* 2 Cor. 12:9.

Hymn: *"Lord of all being, throned afar."*—Oliver Wendell Holmes.

Scripture: Isa. 40:1-31.

Meditation: *GLADNESS IN GOD'S REIGN.*

Text: *"Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."* Rev. 19:6.

These words will be uttered as the glad shout of heaven at the marriage supper of the Lamb. Some people are afraid of the fact that God reigns. Some, indeed, wish that he did not reign. In view of the awful prevalence of present evil, none of us can see how he is yet to bring a culmination of good through his reign, though we believe that he will. But these glorified men and the angels, standing within the precincts of heaven, placed in a position to know, seeing the full culmination of blessedness through the wondrous plan of God, will shout in full chorus of praiseful assent: "Alleluia, alleluia, for the Lord God onmipotent reigneth;" and I doubt not that one of the very richest experiences that could come to us in this present time, would be a full realization of the glad fact that God does reign,—that the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

Now, like every other truth, this one is either alarming or consoling according to the way in which we stand related

to it. God's friends shout it with an "Alleluia." Those who refuse to honor him, must tremble before it.

I. First, "the Lord God omnipotent reigneth," let his enemies tremble. And God has enemies. This whole world of idolatrous and infidel ungodliness hates the high and holy Jehovah. They hate his laws; they hate his people; they hate his Church; they hate his ordinances; they hate his very being; and it is their highest aim to bring themselves, like the fool, to say in their hearts, "There is no God." They set themselves to disprove his very existence, to deny his power and his providence; to substitute chance, or fate, or necessity, or cold natural law, or some great physical force or resistless energy,—in fact anything rather than acknowledge that it is God who "doeth according to his will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth;" that it is the Lord God omnipotent who reigneth.

On the front of the great Downing Hall, in the north of Wales, is this very suggestive inscription. In English translation it reads: "Without God, without all; with God enough." Yes, if we are without God we are without all; while the divinely inspired and opposite truth is, "If God be for us, who can be against us?"

II. "The Lord God omnipotent reigneth;" let his friends shout "Alleluia!" The truth that God is omnipotent in its application to his people is always joyous. If we have spoken of this attribute under the figure of a cloud, then like every cloud that floats above our heads, it has a whole heavenward side all bright and beautiful and glorious. If to his enemies God is an almighty judge, then to his friends he is an all-powerful helper, and there is nothing too hard for him to do.

"The Lord God omnipotent reigneth!" It means assurance of success to his cause. Have you not sometimes trembled for the cause of Christ when you have thought of his great host of enemies? When you have beheld the intemperance, the saloon power, the atheism, the infidelity, the unbelief, the heathenism, all in angry league against God and against his anointed? And yet, his cause shall triumph.

"Jesus shall reign where'er the sun,
Doth his successive journeys run."

"The Lord God omnipotent reigneth!" It means instant help for his children in time of trouble. "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."

"The Lord God omnipotent reigneth!" It means relief in every time of anxiety. How natural it is in us all, when we find ourselves or others of God's professed people in great distress or anxiety, like the Psalmist in the same circumstances, to ask the question, "Doth God know?" In such a time what a relief to our anxiety is such a word as this: "The Lord God omnipotent reigneth." Surely the thought of God's almighty presence is laden with the tenderest consolation to the Christian. He is in the constant presence of an almighty Friend and Helper. Whether wandering in the wilderness or in his quiet home, whether in storm or in calm, the Christian has an all-powerful and loving Helper. He can shed no tear that God sees not; he can breathe no sigh that God hears not; he can utter no prayer that God regards not; and there is no power in the universe, "Neither death nor life nor any other creature * * * is able to separate him from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Prayer: "Sweet is the ministry of thy word, dear Father, to our human need and yearning: We have found

thee in the flower and the star; we have heard thy voice in the wind and in the whisper within our souls. Help us to hear thee and find thee in every place! May our great discovery be the unveiling of Thyself. Lift us above the range of vision shut in by the hills of earth, that we may know how thou givest help out of the boundless areas of the eternal land and love. May we understand how much the fact of thy power seen in heaven and earth means in the conduct of our own human affairs. May we put ourselves this day in perfect contact with the sources of perfect power in thee, our Creator and Father. We ask all through the name of Christ our Lord. Amen."

Unite in the offering the Lord's Prayer.

THE IDEAL OF CHRISTIAN LIFE

Motto for the Week: *"Whom having not seen, ye love."* I Peter 1:8.

Hymn: *"Jesus thy name I love."*—James G. Deck.

Scripture: Col. 3:1-25.

Meditation: *THE IDEAL OF CHRISTIAN LIFE.*

Text: *"For to me to live is Christ."* Phil. 1:21.

Some one has well said that the chief reason why Christianity does not yet pervade the world is that Christ does not yet pervade the life of Christians. But Christ did pervade the life of the Apostle Paul, and it was no boast, but a loyal acknowledgement of attachment to Christ and of the main motive that moved him in all that he did when he said, "For to me to live is Christ." Changed and varied as the scenes about him might be his heart was always the same, as true to its one grand object—and far more steadily—as the magnetic needle is to the pole. A miser might forget his wealth, a watching mother might for a brief instant forget her dying babe, but the Great Apostle was never from under the influence of the Master he served and to the magnifying of whose life he gave his own. His life was leavened, pervaded, moved, dominated by his thoughts of, feelings toward, and devotion to Christ, so that he spoke with a truthfulness of which words were a poor expression, when he said, "For to me to live is Christ."

I. By these words we have no doubt he meant to say, "To me to live is to love Christ." To some people to live

is a man for a man, a man for himself. But that is not really living. Our life is really what we love, and if we do not love we do not live. No one has begun to live whose whole existence has been consumed upon the self-life. To know life as worth living we must have something or somebody to live for. That gay, merry, thoughtless, careless young girl you knew, whose life seemed almost useless, except the delight it gave you just to see her, has been transformed, revolutionized by the sweet seriousness of wifehood and motherhood. A little helpless being has fallen into her arms, and looking up through its blue eyes says, "Take care of me;" and if her thoughts and emotions could be put into speech she would say, "For to me to live is my darling." It is a wonderful transformation love works in human souls. "Life is indeed more than meat and the body more than raiment." Life is love.

But this principle of our life is greatly intensified when we become the subjects of a holy, divine affection,—when one can say, "The love of Christ constraineth me," or "For to me to live is Christ." A great affection had enthroned itself in Paul and it took possession of all his powers, body, soul and spirit, and Christ became not alone the end and constraining motive of his life, but very life itself. In the same way and to the same degree should the love of Christ and love to Christ dominate the life of every Christian, and it is a most blessed fact and experience when they do.

II. But by these words Paul meant, no doubt, again to say, "To me to live is to become like Christ." Christ was not alone the author of his life, the sustainer of his life, the law of his life, but he was the ideal of his life, the pattern of his life, and he could truthfully have said: "To me to live is to reproduce Christ." What a noble ideal the Christian has to work toward! He can say, "I have set the Lord alway before me," and then, as the student of art places

himself before the canvas of some great master and tries to reproduce it, so he tries to reproduce the lines and features and elements of beauty which he sees in his Saviour. Then he can say, "For to me to live is Christ"—to become like, to reproduce Christ. To be sure, no one can succeed perfectly, but oh how happy he is in trying! And how life does become enobled in the effort!

III. Paul no doubt meant by those words to say also, "To me to live is to lead others to love and become like Christ."

It was said of Thomas Pett, a noted English miser, that his pulse rose and fell with his funds, and that he never lay down or rose up without blessing the inventor of compound interest. Of course he made money, for he gave himself wholly to it.

Let us not forget that the same single-mindedness would make us all rich toward God. It was a unity of purpose like this, only infinitely more noble, that ruled in the mind of Paul, and it made him tremendously in earnest and wondrously successful in winning souls to his Saviour.

Are we absorbed in an all-controlling desire to lead others to know Christ, to love Christ, to become like Christ?

IV. What Paul very plainly said was also this: "To me to live is by and by to die and then to be with Christ." To him to live was to love Christ, to try and become like Christ, but this was all to be crowned and glorified by and by through his dying and going to be with Christ. "To die is gain." He knew that if to live was Christ then "to depart and be with Christ" would be "far better."

Just before John Calvin died he wrote to a friend: "My respiration is difficult, and I am about to breathe the last gasp, happy to live and die in Jesus Christ, who is gain to all his children in life and death." He felt what Paul felt and what it is the privilege of every Christian to feel who

finds his all in all in Christ. Whether we look back upon the past, now at the present, or forward into the future; whether within or without, behind or above, or beyond to the consummation, it is the blessed privilege of every Christian to see "Jesus only" and to rejoice in him as not only his lover and friend, but as his present and eternal Saviour.

Prayer: "Blessed Master, we come to hide ourselves in thee. Thou art infinite, and we sink our finite lives in thine eternal years. Thou art loving, and we bury our harsh natures in the flowers of thine overflowing friendship. Thou art powerful, and our weakness is forgotten as we hold thy hand. Thou art light, and our darkness is made brilliant as thou dost look upon us. Thou art purity, and our sins are burned away as we fall before thy glorious whiteness. We are not afraid of thee because thou art so mighty, dear Christ. And if we are ashamed, it is not from distrust of thee, but because we are so unworthy. Stretch out thine arms and let us rest in them for awhile. So shall we gain strength for our journey. Amen, dear Lord, Amen."

Unite in offering the Lord's Prayer.

MOTIVES TO CHEERFULNESS

Motto for the Week: *"He that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast."* Prov. 15:15.

Hymn: *"Awake my soul in joyful lays."*—Samuel Medley.

Scripture: Prov. 3:1-35.

Meditation: *MOTIVES TO CHEERFULNESS.*

Text: *"Be of good cheer."* John 16:33.

As a little girl was eating her dinner the golden rays of the sun happened to fall upon her apron. Putting her spoon to her mouth she exclaimed: "O Mamma, I have swallowed a whole spoonful of sunshine." We believe it would be an excellent thing, doing more good than food or medicine, if a lot of us professed Christians could swallow not one but many spoonsful of sunshine. "A merry heart," the wise Solomon says, "doeth good like a medicine," and we believe that a little "sunshine in our souls" would not alone do us good, but would be the means of good to thousands of others who might be made better and happier through our cheerfulness.

What are some of the motives that ought to influence us to cheerfulness?

I. One, though by no means the highest, is that others have troubles as well as we. Your neighbor may not have your troubles, but he has troubles, just the same. And rich and poor, the high and the lowly, alike do not escape them. We have read that the Czar of Russia cannot trust even the

members of his own household; that the doors of his study are so made that only two or three persons know how to open them; that the walls of his room are lined with steel, and that there are five or six tables distributed around the room, so that no one will know at a given time in what part of the room the Czar is sitting. He has not your trouble. He may not need to worry about his house rent or grocery bills, but the Czar of all the Russias, the crowned head of one hundred million people, has his troubles as well as you and I. If you wait until you have no trouble in order to become cheerful you will never be cheerful. So our advice to you is just to remember that everybody has troubles, and cheer up and bear your troubles bravely and with a hopeful heart.

II. Another motive to cheerfulness is this—that you may not be as bad off as you think. You may have been making the mistake of magnifying your troubles. You may really be in a much better condition than you suppose. Your troubles may be partly imaginary. We have read of an old gentleman who had the rheumatism so badly he could not walk a step. All day long he sat helpless in his chair, and had to be waited on like an infant. One day his attendants carried him in his chair out under the shade of a tree on his lawn. There he sat, perfectly helpless, looking at the birds and the flowers, when suddenly a dog, foaming at the mouth, leaped over the fence and made toward the invalid and his attendants. The attendants, forgetting the man, rushed toward the house. The poor, helpless invalid, who could not take a step, sprang from his chair, and beat his attendants in the house-ward race. He did not know what he could do till he had to; he was not in as bad shape as he thought he was. We knew a woman who had kept her bed for twenty years, who, at an alarm of fire, leaped from her bed and rushed out into the street. We are glad

to say that she was not so foolish as to take to her bed again. She was not in as bad shape as she thought she was. So it may be with you. Cheer up! Get your mind off your troubles. Do not think about them. Think of the bright things in life. Think gratefully of the good things you have, and be cheerful.

III. Another motive to cheerfulness is that it will pay well. It is profitable to you. Some one has well said: "Of all the virtues cheerfulness is the most profitable. It makes the person who exercises it happy, and renders him acceptable to all he meets. While other virtues delay the day of recompense, cheerfulnss pays down." It prolongs life. Dr. Marshall Hall, we are told, frequently prescribed "cheerfulness" for his patients, saying that it was better than anything he could get at the druggists. "Mirth is God's medicine," says a wise writer, "and everybody ought to bathe in it." It was a favorite saying of Bancroft, the historian, who was a vigorous old man at ninety, that the secret of a long life is in cheerfulness—in never losing one's temper. Modern science shows that our mental moods have power to produce disease. Our personal well-being and desire for length of life should prompt us to a life of cheerfulness.

Cheerfulness also secures us friends. We all love the cheerful man, woman or child. We shun the gloomy and melancholy. We may pity them, and wish them well, but we do not love them, we do not enjoy being with them, and avoid them as much as our consciences will allow. It will pay you well in friends and appreciation for you to be full of good cheer. "The cheerful live longest in years and afterward in our regards."

Cheerfulness also increases our enjoyments. "I have been told," says Southey, "of the Spaniard who always put on spectacles when about to eat cherries, in order that the

fruit might look larger and more tempting." We all know the power of good cheer to magnify every enjoyment. It would pay us to cultivate this grace more.

Sidney Smith once said: "I have gout, asthma, and seven other maladies, but—am otherwise very well." John Wesley said: "I feel and grieve, but, by the grace of God, I fret at nothing."

Then, too, it honors religion. The spies that went over into Canaan and carried back of the good fruits of the country, thereby invited the Children of Israel to go forward and enter into the Promised Land. By our cheerfulness and faith in God under all circumstances we honor him and his religion and give a winsome invitation to others to enter into the land where such desirable fruits abound. A cheerful Christian shows to the world that he serves a good Master.

A great variety of motives, therefore, move us to this grace of cheerfulness, especially our own well-being, our regard for the dear ones of our households and all about us, and loyalty to the divine Master we serve.

"Blessed are the joy-makers."

"'Tis always morning somewhere, and above
The awakening continents, from shore to shore,
Somewhere the birds are singing evermore."

Prayer: "O Lord, thy mercy is great, it extendeth over all thy works, it endureth forever, it becomes tender mercy by long use and great endurance, and thy kindness becomes loving kindness, the very bloom and fragrance of love. May we enter into the sanctuary of thine heart, and find rest there, having entered by the living door, the living Christ. How precious are thy thoughts unto us! They are not of the earth earthy; they fill all heaven, they reveal

infinity, they dwell upon the sublimities of the eternal state, and whilst we follow thy thoughts we are lifted up in noblest elevation and forgetting earth and time and space we see heaven opened and the whole creation gathered in worship round the feet of Christ. Let us also gather there and receive the rich blessing of thy Fatherhood. Through the name of Christ we ask. Amen."

Offer together the Lord's Prayer.

UNLOAD YOUR CARES

Motto for the Week: *"In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."* Prov. 3:6.

Hymn: *"Cast thy burden on the Lord."*—Anonymous.

Scripture: Matt. 6:19-34.

Meditation: *UNLOAD YOUR CARES.*

Text: *"Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you."* I Pet. 5:7.

A very beautiful thought is brought out by the French translation of this verse. Where our version reads "casting" the French translation is "unload." The difference of meaning is made plain by an illustration we have somewhere seen. The writer said: "The word 'cast' might seem to bring to our mind the action of taking up something and throwing it over on Jesus; but many times, dear friend, have you not found the cares too heavy to lift? Have you not felt that they are crushing you with their weight? Have you ever seen a coal cart unload? The man took out of the front of the heavy cart a little iron pin and the cart was so balanced on the axles that then, with a slight pressure on the back of the cart, it would tip up and the whole load slide on to the ground, and the pony would trot away with a light step. You do not have to take it up; just take out the little pin of your endeavors to help matters, and then, with your hands of faith and committal, tip up the big load, and then run on, for 'He takes care of you.'"

Whether the cares of life bear as a load upon the shoulders, the head, or the heart, or upon all three, we are permitted to "roll them upon the Lord."

I. Unload the cares you carry on your shoulders. It may be that it is the daily responsibility of toil that rests so heavy upon you. You feel that you have so much to do. There is so much depending on your doing it. Your family must be fed; your children must be educated; that sick wife or daughter must be tended. There is a tremendous load upon your shoulders. You ask if it is possible to unload any such actual, human, every-day burdens as these upon God. How can it be done? For answer we give an illustration heard from the lips of the aged and saintly pastor, the late Rev. Dr. James B. Shaw, of Rochester, N. Y., used in one of the last sermons he preached, shortly before his death. He said: "You have all noticed how little children keep constantly on the go; they play from morning till night and work so hard at it, keeping on, keeping on,—you can scarcely get them to stop to sleep. Indeed if Sleep gets them at all he must catch them on the fly! It is a wonder to you, an actual source of amazement how they ever manage to keep up their work and activity so long. The secret is" he added, "that they are free from care. They do the work and let the father take the worry." If we were only like children in this respect, how much longer and better we could live and how much more we could accomplish! Let us do the work and let the Father take the worry. God is willing to take your load and leave you "free to serve."

A father was moving his library upstairs. His little boy wanted to help, and piled his arms full of books. But at the foot of the stairs he could go no further. The burden was too heavy, and he stood there crying. In a moment the father came and took up both the boy and the

books and carried them up. That is the way God is willing to do with you—carry both you and your burden. "He careth for you."

II. Unload the cares you carry on your head. That may sound a little odd, but people do carry burdens on their heads. Some also carry burdens that no one can see on their heads. There are men who try to sleep with cash books and cash boxes and ledgers piled up on their heads; and some have heavier things, such as stores and buildings and bridges and railroads and great institutions on their heads. In some respects there is not much difference between the burdens that rest on the shoulders and those that rest on the head. Indeed our whole self is concerned when we carry a heavy burden anywhere. Nevertheless many a person has broken down under a burden on the head who could have borne well a greater weight upon the shoulders.

Let another illustration teach us how these burdens of anxiety and mental care and strain can be rolled off upon our Burden Bearer.

A shipmaster was once out for three nights in a storm; close by the harbor, he yet dared not attempt to go in, and the sea was too rough for the pilot to come aboard. Afraid to trust the less experienced sailors, he himself stood firmly at the helm. Human endurance almost gave way before the unwonted strain. Worn with toil, beating about, and yet more with anxiety for his crew and cargo, he was well-nigh relinquishing the wheel and letting all go a-wreck, when he saw the little boat coming with the pilot. At once that hardy sailor sprang on the deck, and, with only a word, took the helm in his hand. The captain went immediately below for food and rest, and especially for comfort to the passengers, who were weary with apprehension. Plainly, now, his duty was in the cabin. The

pilot would care for the ship. Where had his burden gone? Where, indeed? for the captain's heart was as light as a schoolboy's and his mind as free from care. He felt no pressure. The pilot, too, seemed perfectly unconcerned. He had no distress, either. But where had the burden gone? The great load of anxiety was gone forever, fallen in some way or other between them! It must be in some such way as this the untold multitudes of earth are invited to unload their mental cares and anxieties upon God and yet his own burden never become too great.

III. Unload the cares you carry on your heart. God has no children without sorrow, and in many cases the load seems too heavy to be borne; but his own invitation is: "Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee." If you will look at this verse as it stands in our English Bibles you will see that another translation is added upon the margin alongside, introducing the exceedingly impressive figure of speech employed by the Psalmist in his own language. There it reads: "Roll thy way upon the Lord;" as if our care was a burden, and could be heaved off upon Almighty Shoulders, so that our relieved souls could stand up lithe and erect.

But the thing that can most surely unload the heart is to come into consciousness of the fact so plainly stated: "He careth for you." That means that he loves us and sympathizes with us, and will exercise his strength in our behalf. Whatever the burden that bears down the heart, to know that God has not left us out of mind or out of sight, but that he is "keeping watch over his own," and "will make all things work together for our good," cannot fail to lighten the weight and give a sense of security and a glad hope of final good. Unload your cares.

Prayer: "Almighty God, our heavenly Father, who settest the solitary in families, we commend to thy continual care the homes in which thy people dwell. Put far from them, we beseech thee, every root of bitterness, the desire of vain glory and of the pride of life. Fill them with faith, virtue, knowledge, temperance, patience, godliness. Knit together in constant affection those who, in holy wedlock, have been made one flesh; turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers, and so enkindle charity among us all that we be ever more kindly affectioned with brotherly love; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

Offer together the Lord's Prayer

THE MINISTRY OF LITTLE THINGS

Motto for the Week: *"Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."* Matt. 25:40.

Hymn: *"Work for the night is coming."*—Anna C. Coghill.

Scripture: Matt 25:31-46.

Meditation: *THE MINISTRY OF LITTLE THINGS.*

Text: *"And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water only in the name of a disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward."* Matt. 10:42.

When sending out his disciples, Jesus, in a closing word, taught them the importance of the ministry of little things. He said that even a cup of cold water given to one of the earth's thirsty children will not be forgotten.

I. In the first place, Christ gave us this lesson, we think, to let us know how acceptable little services are to him.

How plainly he taught this fact in the account of the widow and her two mites. Little things done in the right spirit are acceptable to us. The child brings her teacher only a little faded flower, but when the act means, "I love you," how it moves and blesses the teacher's heart. Christ wants us to know that when we do all we can for him he will not despise it because it is little. It is inspiring to us to know that even the littles are appreciated. What a

blessing this thought should be to those quiet but steady workers who are always doing not great but little unnoticed things. If you wait for opportunities to do great things you will never accomplish anything. The rain that falls upon the earth and makes the grass grow and the flowers bloom comes down in little drops. Great railroads are built one little shovelful at a time. We all have a call to the ministry of little things; and Christ accepts what we do for him as done to him.

II. Again, Christ gave us this lesson, we think, because he knew what great results flow from doing little things.

It would be better to get a great many people to doing little things than to have a few doing great things. Greater results would be obtained. The splendid suspension bridge at Niagara first went over that profound chasm a tiny kite string. One word of praise from his mother made Benjamin West a painter. A kind sentence or two of commendation bestowed upon a short talk of a young man in prayer-meeting lead one of the most eminent of our present day ministers into the ministry. It was a little thing for a Christian lady to speak a single word of spiritual interest to the writer when a boy, but it lead him to Christ. It was a little thing for the Worcester, Massachusetts, shoemaker to touch John B. Gough on the shoulder, but it saved him from a drunkard's grave, and thousands of others besides him, through his efforts. It was a little thing when a boy invited Mr. Moody into a Boston Sunday School, but it lead him to Christ, and into his work, and a low estimate would reckon fifty thousand souls saved by Mr. Moody's subsequent efforts. Good grows as it goes on. The little rivulet widens to a river. Great results grow from doing little things.

III. But a special reason, we think, why Christ spoke these words was because he wanted us all to work. He knew we would be in danger of thinking we could do so little that we would not try to do anything at all. He also saw what would happen if he could get all to work doing even the littles. When, in olden times, they had meetings by "early candle-light," the two or three candles brought by the first comers made but little light, but when the many came, each with a candle, the room was filled with light. Each coal miner wears a little lamp upon his hat. It gives very little light, but in the mine there are a great many miners with lamps, so there is plenty of light. So in every community there are a great many Christians, and if each individual would do the littles in his or her power there would be a great deal of good work done.

IV. Once again, these words were spoken by Christ, we think, because he wanted us all to know that no worker would lose his reward.

The impression is liable to get abroad that it is those who do conspicuous service who reap the rewards. People think that men like Moses and Joshua and Luther and Knox, and women like Deborah and Esther and Florence Nightingale and Fidelia Fisk are the ones who receive the rewards. But Christ wanted to teach that everyone, in high place or low place, who is faithful to his opportunities and capacity, will in no wise lose his reward.

Prayer: "O God, the Father of the forsaken, the Help of the weak, the Supplier of the needy, who hast diffused and proportioned thy gifts to body and soul, in such sort that all may acknowledge and perform the joyous duty of mutual service; who teachest us that love towards the race of man is the bond of perfectness, and the imitation of thy blessed self; open our eyes and touch our hearts, that

we may see and do, both for this world and for that which is to come, the things which belong unto our peace. Strengthen us in the work we have undertaken; give us counsel and wisdom, perseverance, faith and zeal, and in thine own good time, and according to thy pleasure, prosper the issue. Pour into us the spirit of humility; let nothing be done but in devout obedience to thy will, thankfulness for thine unspeakable mercies, and love to thine adorable Son Christ Jesus. Amen."

Unite in offering the Lord's Prayer.

THINGS MONEY CANNOT BUY

Motto for the Week: *"Godliness with contentment is great gain."* I Tim. 6:6.

Hymn: *"How gentle God's commands."*—Philip Doddridge.

Scripture: I Tim. 6:1-21.

Meditation: *THINGS MONEY CANNOT BUY.*

Text: *"A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches, and loving favor rather than silver and gold."* Prov. 22:1.

Doubtless we are all at times inclined to wish that we were rich. We are quite sure that it would be of great advantage to us in many ways, and possibly it would. One thing, this proverb we are to study together does not give us the least suggestion that it would not. The fact is that the Bible, quite contrary to a prevalent impression, never says anything whatever against the desirability of the possession of money. It does point out that the inordinate or unlawful love of money is a root of all sorts of evil; but it does not condemn either money or the possession of it. Indeed, it quite agrees with a sentiment well expressed by Sir Bulwer Lytton when he says: "Never treat money affairs with levity, for money is character." We all recognize that money is character, that how a man uses money, how he makes it, how he saves it, how he spends it, is one of the very best tests of his practical wisdom and soundness of heart. Money is certainly among God's many good and

perfect gifts, and it is a good thing to possess. I wish that we all might have more of it—as much as we could bear and still keep humble and lowly of heart in the sight of God and man.

But what this proverb we are to study recognizes is that there are some things worth more than money, some things money cannot buy. We will name a few.

I. One thing money cannot buy is a good name. It is above price. It is rather to be chosen than great riches. Each possessor has a right to rejoice in so valuable a possession as an honorable name—not necessarily a distinguished name, but a clean one. Truly pride in such an inheritance, which cannot be bought, is justifiable, if with it we are mingling a feeling of humility and a desire to do one's own part to transmit the name as unsullied as it has been bestowed. This refers to pride in a name we have inherited. We have a right to even greater pride in a name we have ourselves made honorable by our own character and conduct. Millions of money look trifling alongside of character. The crown and glory of life is character. It is the noblest possible possession, constituting a rank in itself, and is a rich estate in conscious integrity and the general good will of our fellows. It dignifies every station, exalts every position in society and exerts a far greater power than wealth ever does, while it brings none of wealth's jealousies and envy.

II. Another thing money cannot buy is a happy home. There are people who have the opposite impression, and think if only they were rich they would have a perfect home. But what makes home? Not the tables and the chairs; not the delicacy of porcelain, nor the artistic beauty which the loom achieves. These minister to comfort, taste and artistic nature; but beyond there is something which

ministers to the heart and soul, glorifying plain surroundings and homely details, something quite illusive to measure or weigh, yet potent to bless, to comfort, to help. What is this but the sympathy, the trust, the spirit of sacrifice, the gentleness, the faith, the readiness to do and to bear which love brings? And love cannot be bought with money.

III. Another thing money cannot buy is a thankful heart. It is good to have gifts; but it is better to have a heart that recognizes the Giver of them all and is truly grateful. The most beauteous prospects, the most luxurious surroundings, the wonders of nature and of art, lose all their charm when viewed by eyes that seeing, see not, or when shared by a cold and thankless heart. The power to enjoy, the power to appreciate, these are what render pleasures, great and small, and extracting the honey of enjoyment from them is not purchaseable at any store, yet it is another and large factor in true happiness.

IV. Another thing money cannot buy is a contented mind. Where can contentment be found? At what store is it sold? What is its price? Not silver nor gold, but a patient trust in God coupled with a thankful heart will bring it to the soul that desires it.

Things cannot make us happy. Contentment cannot be bought. A philosopher was once passing through a mart filled with articles of taste and luxury. We are told that he made himself perfectly happy by this simple yet sage remark: "How many things are in the world of which Diogenes hath no need!"

It may be real help to some of us to know that contentment is a thing that can be gained without money and without price. It is available to us all. It is a very valuable possession. "Godliness with contentment is great gain."

V. One other thing we will mention which money cannot buy is the hope and final happiness of heaven. Our

money will perish with us if we think to purchase either the hope or the final attainment of heaven with gold. Eternal life is a gift. "Heaven alone may be had for the asking."

Let us not make the mistake of putting too high a value on money. It may be a good thing to have; but the best things of this life and of the life which is to come are available to us without money and without price.

Prayer: "Our Father, we thank thee for this day of rest and worship. Help us to keep it holy, and to gain all that we may for our bodies and souls from its sacred privileges. Bless the preaching of thy Word in this community and around the world. Bless all ministers of the gospel, and all teachers of thy truth. Comfort the sad and the lonely, and strengthen the weak and the tempted. Help us this day to make a Sabbath day's journey nearer to thee, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

Offer together the Lord's Prayer.

WORK AS A MEANS OF GRACE

Motto for the Week: *"I am among you as one that serveth."* Luke 22:27.

Hymn: *"Work, for the night is coming."*—Anna L. Coghill.

Scripture: Matt. 13:53-58.

Meditation: *WORK AS A MEANS OF GRACE.*

Text: *"And because he was of the same craft, he abode with them and wrought, for by occupation they were tent-makers."* Acts 18:3.

Among the Jews in early times, it was customary to teach all their children the full details of some useful calling. It is recorded as a saying of one of the wisest of the rabbis that "he who would not bring his son to a trade was as if he forced him to be a thief." Christ's disciples were workingmen.. Christ Himself was a carpenter. Here we see that Paul was a tent-maker. Work is honorable. It may also be very wholesome for us, and usually is.

I. Consider, first, some facts in regard to Paul's conduct as a worker.

Paul chose a decent and reputable calling. No one can doubt that tent-making was above reproach as a business. Some occupations in which men engage today are neither decent nor honorable—saloon-keeping, the blood-sucking of money "brokers" who take mortgages on the household goods of the poor, those who rent shaky, unwholesome tenements, etc.

Paul sought consistent companionship in his business. Aquila and Priscilla were intelligent, high minded and companionable to this man of God.

Bad companions, ill-mated partnerships have wrecked many a business. People of honesty and similar religious tastes naturally drift together. They may be mutually helpful, as were these tent-makers in Corinth. Doubtless, they were agreed on making good tents, in closing their store on the Sabbath, etc. We know that Paul did no Sabbath work, for we are told that "he reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks."

Paul found opportunities to do good when hardest at work. Probably he was the means of the conversion of Aquila and Priscilla, and we know that they became so spiritually intelligent that afterwards he sent the young and eloquent Apollos to them to be "instructed more perfectly in these things," before he was to start out to preach. They conducted the first New Testament theological seminary.

II. Note, secondly, some advantages growing out of the fact of Paul's laboring with his hands.

It put him alongside the people and in sympathy with them. There are "way-up" workers for Christ who can do little on account of the lack of placing themselves near those they would help.

This contact with the people enabled Paul to appreciate their needs and how to meet them. This principle lies back of all the College Settlements and work of such institutions as Hull House, Chicago, Toynbee Hall, and Mansfield House, London. It is not always the fault of the poor that they do not get along better. They do not know how. They can be taught by those who will take the necessary steps to learn and appreciate their needs.

Paul's work in Corinth evidently brought cure for the despondency he was in when he came there. Coming from

Athens, where he had such ill success, he said: "I came to you in weakness and fear, and much trembling." Anyway, we know that there is good cheer in work—not in worry, but in work. The London physician told his rich patient: "Live on three shillings a day and earn it." Work is wholesome for an individual. It is wholesome also for a church. There is nothing like exercise to keep people warm and well.

Paul's work deepened his personal love for Christ. This was because he did his business for Christ and in his name. Business is a means of grace when the underlying motive for doing is love of Christ and a purpose to do his will in the spot where he has placed us. "Prayer and provender hinder no man's journey." There is no such thing as being too busy for religion. But there is such a thing as living so that "whether we eat or drink or whatsoever we do, all shall be done to God's honor and glory."

Let us not think unkindly of our toil. We would soon weary of idleness. Honest work is a blessing, and may be a real means of grace.

Prayer: "Father, help us to hear thy high and holy call in every homely duty and every humble task; in the drudgery of house-keeping; in the dreariness of accounts; in the difficulty of study; in the hardness of toil; in the competition of trade, in the claims of society; in the fight with appetite; in the struggle with poverty; in the management of wealth; in the love of friends; in courtesy to foes. In all the common experiences of life help us to see thy love before us to point out the way our love must take; help us to feel thy strength within making hard things easy, and translating the otherwise impossible into accomplished fact.

Doing all things as thou wouldst have us do them, bearing all things as thou wouldst have us bear them, may we

find thee where alone thou canst be found—in thy world, Lord of its life, Solver of its problems, Saviour from its sin.

Teach us, then, to take eagerly, as from a Father's hand, every wholesome practical pursuit; that in the beautiful world where thou hast placed us, and the interesting work thou givest us to do, we may ever see the face of the Father, and live the life of a child. We ask through Christ our Lord. Amen."

Offer the Lord's Prayer in unison.

THE CALL FOR CONTINUANCE

Motto for the Week: *"He that endureth to the end shall be saved."* Matt. 10:22.

Hymn: *"O Jesus, I have promised to serve Thee to the end."*—John E. Bode.

Scripture: Rev. 3:1-22.

Meditation: *THE CALL FOR CONTINUANCE.*

Text: *"Who will render to every man according to his deeds; to those who by patient continuance in well doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, eternal life; but unto them that are contentious and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath."* Romans 2:6-8.

None of us can be absolutely sure of heaven until he gets there. A good beginning plus a good continuance makes a good ending. The test of endeavor is a safe arrival; and there are always some peradventures in the way to be met. Heed is needed lest, having preached to others, I myself, should be a castaway. The proof of our religion is the holding on to the end. Patient continuance is the one test of established character, and it is the only evidence of our being really "rooted and grounded in Christ." "He that endureth unto the end," said Christ, "shall be saved." "Wherefore, gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope unto the end," urges the Apostle Peter. In Hebrews we read: "For we are made partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the

end." Just before closing the last book of his Revelation, God sent letters to the members of the "seven churches in Asia," and this was the burden of his message: "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life." "He that overcometh and keepeth my words unto the end will I give power over the nations," was the word to the people of Thyatira. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me on my throne, as I also overcame and am set down with my Father on his throne," was the exhortation to the Laodiceans. Seven repeated times in two short chapters are promises made "to him that overcometh," and to only such. How important it is, then, that we all hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end! How important it is, fellow-disciple, that you cherish your hope! Never give up or give over your faith. Be steadfast. Hold on; hold fast; hold out. Patience is genius. Persistence is victory. He who does not tire, tires adversity, and all comes out right to him who perseveres.

"Courage, brother! do not stumble,
Though thy path be dark as night;
There's a star to guide the humble;
Trust in God and do the right."

The very essence of perseverance is contained in that line, "Trust in God and do the right." That is the true union of faith and works. That tells us that the Christian life is after all a practical life. If we would succeed we must do something. We need faith in God—that is true—but we need also patient continuance in well doing; and if we are ever so happy as to reach heaven at all, it will be because we exercised that very practical grace.

Our theme is the call for continuance, or the great necessity there is on our part, as Christians, for "patient continuance in well doing."

I. One reason is on account of the many difficulties and discouragements we must meet. We all know something of the heartaches, the fears of failure, the discouragements and the temptations there are toward letting go and giving up. Oftentimes, how long and how hard seems the way; how steep the mountains and how wide the streams we must cross before we can hope to enter the celestial city. This, I am convinced, is one of the commonest assaults of evil, —this tendency toward discouragement, toward despondency in the Christian life, toward letting go and giving up.

For example, here is one who resolves to enter upon the Christian course. He accepts and confesses the Saviour, and is counted among the people of God. But before he is fairly under way Satan comes to him, and says: "Now, of course, you have started; but you forgot to count the cost. Only think how long and difficult the way, and how much you must endure. You are a fool to try. You may as well give up first as last and have done with it. Anyway, you are a fool to try in your circumstances, or with your nature and disposition. Some people may succeed under their more favorable circumstances or with different inherited tendencies, but you may be sure it is impossible for you. Why strain and struggle at what you know is impossible? Don't do it. Give up. Quit!"

Now if life were a mere holiday pleasure trip, or if we could be "carried to the skies on flowery beds of ease," then I would think it unwise to mention such testings; but discouragements and doubts and solicitation to sin and fierce testings are absolutely sure to come. If, then, to be forewarned is to be in any degree forearmed, it is well for us all to know the need we will find for patient continuance in well doing.

II. A second reason why we speak of the great need there is for patient continuance in well doing, is because all success depends upon it.

Before his death Rev. Dr. Theodore L. Cuyler was heard to remark that he had been watching the careers of young men in Brooklyn and New York for many years, and, said he: "I have come to the deliberate conclusion that the chief difference between the successful and the failures lies in the single element of staying power." Permanent success is oftener won by holding on than by sudden dash, however brilliant. The easily discouraged who are pushed back by a straw, are all the time dropping to the rear. Every man's success in the world depends largely on patient continuance, persistence, endurance. Something like this is what General Daniel Morgan, of Revolutionary fame, meant, when in comparing the soldiers of the war, he said: "As to the fighting part of the matter, the men of all nations are pretty much alike; they fight as much as they find necessary, and no more. But, sir, for the grand essential in the composition of the good soldier, give me the Dutchman,—he starves well." Yes, it is this persistent endurance, this staying power in the athlete on the race-course, the rower in the boat-race, or the warrior in the battle-charge, that in the long run tells.

I remember as a boy often hearing the saying: "Brag is a big dog, but Holdfast is better." Oliver W. Holmes has put the same thought into a somewhat homely but very practical couplet, when he says:

"Stick to your aim; the mongrel's hold will slip,
But only crowbars loose the bull-dog's grip."

After a great snowstorm a little fellow began to clear a path before the door with nothing but a small kitchen shovel to work with. "How do you expect to get through that drift?" asked a gentleman passing. "By keeping at

it," cheerfully exclaimed the little fellow, "that's how." Yes, and that is the secret of mastering almost every difficulty. Keeping at it,—that's how.

"Hard pounding, gentlemen," said Wellington at Waterloo, "but we will see who can pound the longest."

Everyone admires a determined and persistent man. Marcus Morton ran sixteen times for governor of Massachusetts. At last his opponents voted for him from sheer admiration of his pluck, and he was elected by one majority. Successful men, it is said, owe more to their perseverance than to their natural powers. "How long did it take you to learn to play?" asked a young man of Geradini. "Twelve hours a day for twenty years," replied the great violinist. Lyman Beecher's father, when asked how long it took him to write his celebrated sermon on the "Government of God," replied, "About forty years."

"General Taylor never surrenders," said old "Rough and Ready," at Buena Vista, when Santa Anna with 20,000 men offered him a chance to save his 4,000 soldiers by capitulation; and all the world honors him for his victory.

But if this persistent endurance, this staying power, is indispensible in all secular pursuits, so is it even more noticeably necessary in the spiritual life. Here, too, we need the never-surrender spirit, the power of persistency of purpose. Carlyle has said: "Every noble work at first seems impossible." But, we may add, the seeming does not make it so. Success often depends on knowing just how much effort it will take in order to succeed. It is better to know, even if it does call for courage. He is a foolish shipman who dampens fires and cools off boilers half way across the Atlantic. It is wise to count on the whole voyage, and keep up the heat. If we have enlisted, or are thinking of enlisting under Christ, let us bear in mind that he only accepts soldiers for a life campaign. We

shall find, and must expect to find, much occasion for patient continuance. The soldier who stands fire to the last shot wins the victory; and only he that endureth unto the end shall be saved.

Prayer: "Eternal Light, before whom all darkness is light, and, in comparison with whom every other light is but darkness! May it please thee to send forth thy light and thy truth, that they may lead us. Purify, we pray thee, our souls from all impure imaginations, that thy most beautiful and holy image may be again renewed within us, and, by contemplating thy glorious perfections, we may feel daily improved within us that Divine similitude, the perfection whereof we hope will at last make us forever happy in that full and beatific vision we aspire after. Till this most blessed day break, and the shadows flee away, let thy Spirit be continually with us, and may we feel the powerful effects of thy Divine grace constantly directing and supporting our steps; that all our endeavors, throughout the whole remaining part of our lives, may serve to promote the honor of thy blessed Name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

Offer the Lord's Prayer in unison.

ONE DAY AT A TIME

Motto for the Week: *"As thy days, so shall thy strength be."* Deut. 33:25.

Hymn: *"Wait, my soul upon the Lord."*—William F. Loyd

Scripture: Matt. 6:5-21.

Meditation: *ONE DAY AT A TIME.*

Text: *"And the people shall go out and gather the portion of a day in his day."* Ex. 16:4. (Margin.)

A doctor was once asked by a patient who met with a serious accident, "Doctor, how long shall I have to lie here?" The answer, "Only a day at a time," taught the patient a precious lesson. It is the same lesson God taught his people, and the people of all ages since, through the method of his provision for Israel during their wilderness journey. The day's portion in its day. Day by day the manna fell, enough for each day, and no more, and no less.

I. Trust your Master by the day. The Christian life is a life of trust. The children of Israel received their manna "day by day," just what they needed, all they could use, but no more and no less. So God promises us, not as thy weeks, or as thy months, but as thy days so shall thy strength be. And that means Monday's grace for Monday, and Tuesday's grace for Tuesday, and so on. Why then borrow trouble for the future? We are especially told by the Saviour not to take anxious thought for any

tomorrow. The true rule is to live by the day. Live a life of trust.

The law of divine grace is sufficient unto the day. The law of the divine deliverance is a very present help. The law of the divine guidance is step by step. One who carries a lantern on a dark road at night sees only a step before him. If he takes that he carries the lantern forward and that makes another step plain. At length he reaches his destination in safety without once stepping into darkness. The whole way was made light to him though only a single step of it at a time. This is the method of God's guidance, one step at a time. Thy word is a lamp. My grace is sufficient. The portion of a day is his day. Trust your Master by the day.

II. Have fellowship with your Master by the day. The day's portion for its day was given to Israel in the morning very early. This may serve to suggest to us how greatly the power to spend a day aright, to abide all the day in Jesus, depends on the morning hour. It is only when the believer each morning secures his quiet time in secret with his Master, regularly renewing living fellowship with his Saviour, that the abiding can be kept up all of the day. "Remember the morning watch!" was the last cry of a band of departing missionaries to their companions on the pier, as the steamer which carried them off to Asia cast off her hawser. "Remember the morning watch!" we would call out to every professed disciple of Christ. Practice the presence of God. Have fellowship with your Master day by day. More imperative than any business engagement; more sacred than any matter of family concern; more important than eating and sleeping make this daily engagement with God. Spend a time with your Master, in sweet fellowship with him. So doing you will be able to go out into each day and live that day "as seeing him who is invisible."

III. Serve your Master by the day. One day's work at a time is all you are accountable for. There is but one working day and that is called Today. "Go work today in my vineyard." "Work while it is called today, the night cometh." Only a day at a time, that is all you will be accountable for. No one but a fool lives in tomorrow.

In fact there is no tomorrow, for each tomorrow is today, when it comes. There never was a Christian strong enough to carry today's duties with tomorrow's worries piled on top of them. It is a blessed secret, this living by the day.

Prayer: "O God, we desire to put our lives into thy hands. Take our wills and make them thine. Lead us into the truth, we beseech thee. Help us ever to hold sincere converse with our own souls and never speak unto them what we feel to be untrue or exaggerated. We seek thy guidance and counsel, not that we may escape the toil and the burdens and the pains of life, but that our suffering and our labor be not in vain. Order our footsteps aright, lead us in the way everlasting, the way that passes by the Cross and leads up to the throne of God and of the Lamb. Amen."

Unite in offering the Lord's Prayer.

THE DIVINE AND THE HUMAN IN THE CHURCH

Motto for the Week: *"I will be with thee; I will not fail thee, nor forsake thee."* Joshua 1:5.

Hymn: *"Onward Christian soldiers marching as to war."*—S. Baring-Gould.

Scripture: Ephesians 6:10-24.

Meditation: *THE DIVINE AND THE HUMAN IN THE CHURCH.*

Text: *"The sword of the Lord and of Gideon."* Judges 7:20.

About a mile east of the village of Jezreel is the famous fountain known as the Spring of Harod. It issues from a great cavern near the base of Mount Gilboa. It is known by the natives as Ain Jalud and by travelers popularly as the "Fountain of Gideon." This fountain is the principal source of the River Jalud, which flows away down the valley of Jezreel into the Jordan. At the present time the fountain head is about fifteen feet wide and two feet deep, and is partly surrounded with reeds and rushes. It widens out below into a pool about fifty feet wide. The sloping ground thereabout, within easy reach of the fountain, has been a favorite resort for herdsmen and camping place for caravans and military bands in all ages. It was here that the three hundred men were chosen by Gideon to go against the Midianites; for the Lord had said to Gideon, "By the

three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into thine hand." As we recently stood on the hill at Jezreel and looked across the valley, here about four miles wide, bounded on the north by the Hill of Moreh and on the south by Mount Gilboa, and thought of the Midianites spread out in this valley, we thought how exactly the locality fits in with the narrative of Gideon's campaign.

But let us not take space to describe the campaign or the great victory in the battle of the pitchers. Of these you may read in chapters six and seven. Instead, let us gather up a few lessons, and especially in connection with the thought of the Divine and the Human in the Church.

I. The first fact is that God does use human instruments. He sends no angels to preach or teach or make known his Gospel,—to win victories for his Church. He uses us. He used Gideon and his men. The shout was "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon." It was God's sword in a man's hand that won the victory. The fight was not by God alone. It was not by Gideon alone. It was God and Gideon allied. God was using a willing and ready and brave man. "We are laborers together with God."

God's cause has enemies and he summons us to the battle for the right. Gideon blew his trumpet and first gathered his own clan into the nucleus of an army. Then he sent messengers througout the land with a summons to battle. "His summons reminds us," says a recent writer, "of the beautiful custom of ancient Scotland of assembling their clans by means of the fiery cross. A light cross of wood was charred at the point, and the flames quenched in the blood of a goat. This was sent around to the homes and villages of the clan, each one sending it to his next neighbor, with only the name of the meeting-place. And every one was bound under fearful anathemas to obey the sign." The summons was swift and sure; the response was

instant and universal. Respond to the call for your aid in the Church of Christ against the enemies of Christ. God's cause needs leaders and he gets them from among those who are already occupied. He found Gideon not among idlers, but at his work,—just as he found Moses and David keeping sheep, Elisha plowing, and as Christ found Peter and other Apostles fishing. Gideon was threshing wheat. God called him to thrash his enemies.

A few men of the right sort are better than many only half-hearted. Gideon's army numbered 32,000. The timid were allowed to go home. Twenty-two thousand went. The remaining ten thousand were commanded to drink from the Spring of Harod. Only those were chosen who crouched, lapping up the water with open hand, their eyes upon the enemy, possibly concealed in the rushes. Of these there were only three hundred. This was a sensible test, for those who stooped to drink did not appreciate the situation, and a few such men might defeat the tactics of Gideon. God tests his servants before he calls them. The self-indulgent and unwatchful are not used.

Confidence is necessary in those who would fight God's battles. Mr. Moody used often to say, "God never uses a discouraged man." Have faith in God. Have faith that he intends to use you. Gideon was prepared for his battle by being encouraged. He was told the soldier's dream and was sure of overcoming.

II. God uses human instruments, but the instruments must be prepared for his use.

We have already shown some of the steps in the preparation of Gideon and his men. They were men already engaged, not indolent and inactive. They were men who stood a special test. They were men of alertness and strong heart. How do we know when men are available? As with the Israelites, our characters are tested by very little

actions. The test is usually applied when we are unconscious of it.

A boy applied to a banker for a position. He was told that there was no place vacant at the time. The boy turned regretfully away, but noticing a pin on the floor picked it up and laid it on the table. As he started out the officer of the bank called him back and said: "We want you. We will make a place for you." Character is revealed by very trivial actions. That boy became the leading financier of France. His little act showed a boy with careful habits.

We are best prepared for larger work by doing lesser duties well. He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in that which is much. Do today's duties well, no matter how trivial they may seem. Faithfulness in the simplest duties is training for and the road to the being chosen to do the highest duties.

III. Through these prepared men God won a great victory.

In three companies the men of Israel stole around the Midianites at night. Each man carried a horn, a water pitcher, and a torch. The torch was placed in the pitcher, just as the natives now carry a light on windy nights. At a given signal the men in the companies surrounding the Midianites, smashed their pitchers, raised their torches, blew their trumpets, and shouted, "The sword of the Lord and of Gideon!" The rout was complete. The crash of the pitchers, like the noise of many chariots, the sound of horns, like from the leaders of regiments, and the glare of the torches, always impressive at night, and especially so to persons just suddenly aroused from sleep—these things led the enemy to think that they were surrounded by a vast host. They fled in tumultous flight down the descent toward the Jordan fords, and unable to distinguish friend from foe

they struck out at all and slew one another in their own company, resulting in a very great defeat and slaughter.

IV. God would have us do our part, and yet when we have done all and the victory is won it is his. "One with God is always a majority." Sometimes he wins by a few just to teach us that he can win with a few. If many were used the soldiers might think they had gotten the victory through their own might. It is a privilege to be used. The victory is God's.

Prayer: "O God, grant unto us that we be not unwise, but understanding thy will; not slothful, but diligent in thy work; that we run not as uncertainly, nor fight thy battles as those that beat the air. Whatsoever our hand findeth to do, may we do it with our might; that when thou shalt call thy laborers to give them their reward, we may so have run that we may obtain; so have fought the good fight, as to receive the crown of eternal life; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

Repeat the Lord's Prayer in unison.

THE FORM AND POWER OF GODLINESS

Motto for the Week: *"Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts."* Psalm 51:6.

Hymn: *"Christian seek not yet repose."*—Charlotte Elliott.

Scripture: Psalm 51:1-19.

Meditation: *THE FORM AND THE POWER OF GODLINESS.*

Text: *"Having the form of godliness, but denying the power thereof; from such turn away."* 2 Tim. 3:5.

"Godliness" is another word for religion, or Christianity. Sometimes the term is used to refer more particularly to that part of our religion which concerns our duty to God Himself; but here we regard it as including the whole of genuine religion. When we speak of a "form" we refer to a draft or outline or a sketch of anything, or the external figure or appearance of it. The form of godliness is that part of it which is external, which we can see, which is visible to our senses.

1. We notice first, then, that godliness has a form.

It has a form of conception. Rom. 2:20. It has forms of words to express the conceptions. 2 Tim. 1:13. "Hold fast the form of sound words." We find in the Scriptures, in creeds and confessions and articles of faith, excellent forms of words to express religious conceptions.

It has forms of worship; and the man who has the form of godliness usually attends some place of religious worship, hears some ministers of religion, reads the Scriptures, and pays attention to prayer both in public and private.

Godliness takes form also in the practice of moral duties. A man who practices the form of godliness is honest. He avoids all acts of theft or robbery, keeps his hands from pilfering and stealing, pays his debts promptly, and never takes advantage of another's ignorance or necessity in buying or selling. Such a man is also true; he puts away lying and speaks truth with his neighbor. The man who practices the form of godliness is also charitable and benevolent. Indeed, he is careful to observe all the forms of moral rectitude, sobriety, honesty, integrity, charity, etc.

II. But notice, secondly, that godliness has not only a form, but a power.

The essence of every genuine existence is a power. The letters of a word constitute its form; but the meaning of the word is its power. The outward fact of Christ's resurrection is its form; the spiritual essence or significance is its power. The words which convey the Gospel make up its form; but that which is conveyed is its power. This is true in the highest sense of "godliness," which is eminently a "power;" indeed the greatest among men because it is the channel whereby we communicate with the truth and love and life of God, our Maker.

The power of godliness is the power of truth. A wonderful transformation takes place when truth enters into the soul of a man. Sometimes we can almost see its workings. For example, here is a poor, degraded, lost man. Passing along the street he happens carelessly to stroll into a place of religious worship. Suddenly some truth fixes itself upon his mind, finds way to his understanding and

his conscience, and it works invisibly until the man has become a new creature in Christ Jesus. I Cor. 1:18.

The power of godliness is the power of love. Love is a powerful passion, and where the vital force of godliness is felt the love of God is shed abroad in the heart, and it is manifested in the strong attachment to him, and inward delight, which Christians feel in worshipping God in spirit and in truth and in doing his will.

The power of godliness is the power of faith. Faith is mighty in its operations. All the acts of heroism accomplished by the Old Testament saints are attributed to faith. Enoch was translated by faith; Noah built the ark by faith; Abraham offered Isaac by faith; and Gideon, Barak, Sampson, Jephtha, David, Samuel, and all the prophets, through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, etc., Heb. 11. Faith overcomes the world. I John 5:4, 5. Faith quenches all the fiery darts of the evil one. Eph. 4:16. All things are possible to him that believeth. Mark 11:23.

The power of godliness is the power of the Holy Ghost. His power is given unto us and by His power we prevail. Zech. 4:6.

III. But we must notice lastly, a very important fact, namely that it is quite possible for persons to have the form of godliness while denying, or lacking, the power thereof.

There are many people who have a true conception of religion, who stand by the form of sound words which expresses the conceptions of religion, who go through the forms of worship which religion requires and who even practice well the moral duties demanded by religion and yet who have no religion. They have the form of godliness but deny the power thereof. At the Eden Musem in New York, we once saw a large collection of wax-work men. They were all outside. They were very fair to look upon, but

they had no soul, no life. They were outside and nothing else. Let us not forget that there are wax-work Christians, too. Like Barnum's Siamese twins, they may move and breathe and seem to be alive, but it is all a sham, for though they have the form of godliness they deny the power thereof. Thus a man may have the logic of godliness, the words of godliness, the litany, the music, the architecture of godliness; but if he have not godliness itself he is as cold and dead and more useless than a figure of wax.

Let us beware of thinking of religion as a matter of going through with forms. The old monks of York Minster used to think that duty could be done and merit massed by walking around the arches of the solemn cathedral in sedate procession. According to their accurate measurement, twelve rounds made one mile of marching virtue. There yet may be seen holes in a board at the great portal, supplied with pegs, with which they checked off their religion. But those old monks are not the only people who have made the mistake of supposing that going through so many forms meant just that much religion. You may go through forms and have religion; but let us guard carefully against the mistake of thinking that religion itself consists in going through the forms.

Again, let us obey the text by being ware of the people who have the form of godliness but deny the power thereof. The direction given is, "From such turn away." The possession of the form without the power disposes men to the denial of the power. He who has the form alone is apt to be satisfied with the form, and to resent as an impertinence and insult to himself the demand for anything further. He denies the necessity. Some deny by disowning the necessity for true religion; some by ignoring it; some by resorting to forms. Both inclination and self-in-

terest should lead us to turn away from such. Not in enmity toward them, but in the sense of not walking with them or finding delight in their ways. Two cannot walk together except they be agreed. You can get no good from those who deny the power of godliness; but you may get much evil.

Prayer: "We give thee thanks, Almighty God, for the bread of the body that perisheth, and we beseech thee to give us that bread by which man's higher life is fed, that we, laying hold of the life that never dies, may thereby be fitted for the troubles and burdens of this life, and look forward with joy to the higher and better life. So may we live in constant childlike trust in thee, as to believe, though we behold it not, that the end of all things is divine, and to catch the music to which this world is set by thee. Lead thou us from the lower life to the better life, that little things may lose their power to vex us, and in the midst of the troubles of this life, we may have the peace of God that passeth all understanding. Of thy loving-kindness and tender mercy hear us, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

Offer the Lord's Prayer in unison.

THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE—SOUGHT

Motto for the Week: *"Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness."* Matt. 6:33.

Hymn: *"Art thou weary, art thou languid?"*—John M. Neale.

Scripture: Rev. 22:1-21.

Meditation: *THE PEARL OF GREAT PRICE—SOUGHT.*

Text: *"The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchantman seeking goodly pearls."* Matt. 13:45.

Life is a search for goodly pearls. In business, in thinking, in art, in literature, in all that we do we are seeking for pearls of the greatest worth, the very best attainable.

In this parable Christ did not for one moment condemn this quest. He takes human nature as it is and appeals to it. He appeals to the restless anxious search of the human heart for the highest good, and tells us that it is this very motive, this very purpose and ambition that the kingdom of heaven came to satisfy. If you desire the secret of the success of the religion of Christ you will find it here. Religion is an appeal to something within us. It meets a felt necessity. We are all soul hungry; it offers us the "bread of life." We are thirsty; it puts to our lips "the water of life." We long to be rich; it

puts within our grasp the "pearl of great price." We have within us longings which refuse to be satisfied by the little gems we may gather from the sand upon the shores of our earthly existence, but the kingdom of heaven offers us one pearl of great price for which we should be glad to sell all that we have in order to make that one our own.

I. This parable sets forth, first, the exceeding worth of salvation through Christ.

The spiritual blessings laid up in Christ are set before us as so rich that all other good becomes comparatively worthless. The merchant, when he found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it. Christianity claims to be of the utmost importance to every one of us. Do we usually regard it so, or do we give it only a secondary place in our lives? Can we say with Paul: "Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord"? "What things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ"? Do we count all else but as nothing that we may win Christ? Men have parted with all they had for the kingdom of heaven's sake. They have subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword; they have endured cruel mockings and scourgings, they have been stoned, sawn asunder, slain with the sword; they have wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented, all that they might win Christ and have the pearl of great price as their treasure. And we believe they acted wisely in it all, and that this is the teaching of this parable. It is just such wisdom the Bible sets forth as "better than rubies," and all the things that can be desired are "not to be compared to her." "Man knoweth not the price thereof.

It cannot be valued with the gold of Ophir, with the precious onyx, or the sapphire. The gold and the crystal cannot equal it; and the exchange of it shall not be for jewels of fine gold."

Does it pay to be a Christian? Can you invest in anything better? Put religion to the test, try the gold in the furnace, bring the pearl to the jeweler and see whether its value is quoted too high. Find out whether salvation "rules too high" on our spiritual exchanges. Do you not find the pearl too precious to be dissolved, like the Egyptian queen's in a cup of sinful pleasure? Is it not too glorious to be sold, like Esau's birthright for one mess of pottage? Who can estimate the value of the soul? Who can tell in dollars and cents the exceeding value of salvation of the pearl of great price? The teaching is, that religion is the very most important thing in all this world to every one of us.

II. Notice, again, that the duty of obtaining this pearl is an appeal to common sense. This is shown by the reference to the conduct of a merchantman. Now, none of us doubt the energy, the prudence, the common-sense of merchantmen. We glory in the strength of character and sagacity of mind developed by business. These very traits of merchantmen are recognized in this parable. Christianity is willing to submit its claims to the test of business principles. The kingdom of heaven is like unto a merchantman;—like the best business man among us, with an eye as keen and a wisdom as far-seeing. The kingdom of heaven is not like some dreamer, some impractical man who begins to build not knowing whether he will be able to finish, or who invests without carefully weighing the chances of profit; but it is like unto a merchantman,—one who counts the cost, who lays his plans, who keeps his books, and who acts with both wisdom and energy. And

so this parable should appeal to all, and especially to people who claim to possess business force. Some people seem to think that religion only appeals to children and weaklings, but has nothing for strong men with strong minds and stirring nature. But how different is the fact. It comes to the active practical farmer and says: "You know, 'Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap'; well, 'He that soweth to the flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption, but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.'" It asks you. "Do men gather grapes of thorns or figs or thistles? Can a good tree bring forth evil fruit or a corrupt tree good fruit?" It comes to the scholar and the philosopher, and says: "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good." The religion of Christ demands that it be put to the test. It is not afraid of the light. It addresses men as rational creatures. It appeals to reason and bids wise men judge, calmly, intelligently, searchingly and honestly of its claims. That is the same as saying, If you are convinced of the importance of salvation why don't you accept it? It appeals to the prudent mechanic and says: "Which of you intending to build, sitteth not down first and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish?" That means if you enlist at all you should enlist for life. It comes to the shrewd business man and puts a question of profit and loss, of exchange, and says: "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul, or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" And that means that there is nothing in this world so important to one as his soul's salvation. So Christianity appeals to us all in every department of life, and asks us to consider its claims, to bring them to the test of common sense. If this life ends all, surely we may as well eat and drink, for tomorrow we die. But if there is a "kingdom of heaven"

where we may live forever, or a "kingdom of darkness" where men are lost is it then not the wise and manly and common-sense thing to do, to look the claims of religion squarely in the face? Let us put the gold to the test. Let us weigh the pearl in the balance, and see if it will pay to invest.

"I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment that thou mayest be clothed, and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve that thou mayest see." "Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread and your labor for that which satisfieth not? hearken diligently unto me and eat ye that which is good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness." Set out on the quest for the Pearl of Great Price.

Prayer: "O Loving Father, hear us, thy children, as we pray. We need thy presence every passing hour. Be ready to hear us, we beseech thee. Life is a struggle against sin. On every hand temptation assails us. Sometimes we know its coming and resist. Sometimes we yield. Oh, give us wisdom always to know, and grace and strength always to overcome. We do long to become more and more like Jesus. We are not ashamed of his gospel. We have found it to be power unto salvation. Let us never bring reproach upon his name by any act or word. Let us never harm a single harmless soul. May the spirit of love become in us a controlling power. Keep us gentle, peaceful, tender, thoughtful, true. Let the spirit of contention cease to operate as now in the hearts of men. Even in thy Church there is bickering and strife. Make this to cease, O our God. Once more we profess our love for thee. Accept us, Father, we beseech thee. May Jesus as the revelation of thy love, thy perfect love, become our inspiration. So shall our lives glorify thee. And with

all this grant to us the forgiveness of our sins. We ask it as so often we have asked in the name and for the sake of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen."

Unite in offering the Lord's Prayer.

THE FOLLY OF MOTE-PULLING

Motto for the Week: *"Charity suffereth long, and is kind."* I Cor. 13:4.

Hymn: *"Blest be the tie that binds."*—John Fawcett.

Scripture: Col. 3:1-17.

Meditation: *THE FOLLY OF MOTE-PULLING.*

Text: *"Judge not, that ye be not judged," etc.* Matt. 7:1-6.

Fault-finding is not in itself a sin. On the contrary it is often a duty. The old Levitical law said, "Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbor, and not suffer sin upon him." And under the New Testament law of love there is the exhortation: "Reprove, rebuke, with all long-suffering and doctrine." But, as some one has well said, "A duty may become a sin if wrongfully done." The spirit of the Christian is the spirit of love and gentleness. Yet there are times when he must rebuke sin and take no compromising position in the presence of evil. To be censorious, however, is to be un-Christlike and disobedient to his wish.

But there are certain things to be said about mote-pulling and beam-pulling. The first is:

I. Take care that you get them in the right order. Beam-pulling comes first. "First cast out the beam that is in thine own eye." Following that simple direction would stop a lot of mote-pulling. "Physician, heal thyself." "Wherefore thou art inexcusable, O man, whosoever thou

art that judgest; for wherein thou judgest another thou condemnest thyself, because thou doest the same thing."

II. Secondly, bear in mind that mote-pulling is dangerous business. In judging others we court judgment upon ourselves. A Spanish proverb says: "If our faults were written on our foreheads we should have to go with our hats pulled over our eyes." Another familiar proverb says that "people who live in glass houses should never throw stones."

"Before you mark another's sin
Bid thine own conscience look within."

Mote-pulling is often the unconscious result of an unforgiving spirit. If we do not forgive others God cannot forgive us. So both from his fellow-men and from God there is danger to the man who judges his brother—who enters unwisely into the mote-pulling business.

III. Thirdly, mote-pulling is frequently a very hypocritical performance. If we have studied ourselves carefully most of us have found that in proportion as we have become quick to discern the faults of others we have less and less discerned our own shortcomings. Frequently when we have found faults in others they were but reflections of faults in our own lives. "It takes a rogue to catch a rogue." There are a good many sins that if we did not indulge so much ourselves we would not see so plainly in our fellow-men.

IV. Then, too, mote-pulling is oftentimes a most useless performance. It certainly is useless so long as there is plainly visible inconsistency in our own lives.

V. Therefore, mote-puller, take care. It is a delicate matter to pluck a mote or a cinder out of an inflamed eye. Take care how you do it. First be sure your hands are clean. That does not mean that we must live sinless lives

before we can begin to help others; but it does mean that we must be right with God, and show also by our spirit that it is our constant aim to be and to do that which we are asking of others.

Take care that you do your mote-pulling very tenderly and gently also. It requires a great deal of tact and tenderness to help a brother by finding fault with him; though it can be done.

VI. Before you begin change places. Change places with the one you mean to help. It is best to begin that way; for you will have to change places before you get through. "For with what measure ye mete it shall be measured unto you again." As a man soweth in his judgment of others, so shall he reap.

VII. Put on charity as a garment. Recognizing the danger, the delicacy, the importance of the work, being in right relations with God and with your fellow-men, resolved on great tact and tenderness, with a clear conscience, clean hands and clothed in the white robes of charity, you are in a condition to do good in the ministry of reproof. But do not forget this last condition, to put on charity as a garment. "Charity suffereth long and is kind; charity envieth not; doth not behave itself unseemly, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil."

Prayer: "O Lord, grant to us so to love thee with all our heart, with all our mind, and all our soul, and our neighbor for thy sake; that the grace of charity and brotherly love may dwell in us, and all envy, harshness, and ill-will may die in us; and fill our hearts with feelings of love, kindness, and compassion, so that, by constantly rejoicing in the happiness and good success of others, by sympathizing with them in their sorrows, and putting away

all harsh judgments, and envious thoughts, we may follow thee, who art thyself the true and perfect Love.

Pour upon us, O Lord, the spirit of brotherly kindness and peace; so that, sprinkled with the dew of thy benediction, we may be made glad by thy glory and grace; through Christ our Lord. Amen."

Unite together in offering the Lord's Prayer.

TRUE CHRISTIAN SOLDIERSHIP

Motto for the Week: *"Put on the whole armor of God."* Eph. 6:11.

Hymn: *"A charge to keep I have."*—Charles Wesley.

Scripture: Eph. 6:10-24.

Meditation: *TRUE CHRISTIAN SOLDIERSHIP.*

Text: *"The weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds."* 2 Cor. 10:4.

War seems always to be popular, even among the most civilized people. Man has a belligerent instinct. But that does not imply that it is right to fight his fellow-man. It was placed within him to inspire him to a conquest of nature, and of his physical propensities, and of his moral and spiritual enemies. Through it the race is advanced. Here is the region for his heroism. Here he may show the soldier qualities, better than fighting his brother at home or abroad. He has plenty of the worst antagonists at his own door. Let him fight them and win the title of a "good soldier of Jesus Christ."

The passage we are to study leads us to notice the warfare, the weapons, and the victories of true soldiership.

I. The warfare. The Christian warfare is different from all other scenes of conflict. Most wars originate from beneath, from the evil passions of men. Not so the Christion warfare. Its origin is divine and heavenly and its aims the same. Most earthly wars arise from avarice, am-

bition, or desire for revenge. But not so the Christian warfare; it is based upon righteousness; it is fought in the interests of the cause of truth and justice and equity,—of peace and holiness and blessedness. Earthly wars aim at spreading misery, devastation and death. The Christian warfare spreads comfort, health, felicity, life. It is one of compassion, of tenderest goodness, of sweetest mercy. The banners, paradoxical as it may appear, bear the symbol of a Lamb, and their motto is "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will toward men."

II. The weapons. They are described both negatively and positively. Negatively: They are "not carnal." There are some weapons the Christian is to disown and not to use. His religion is never to be spread, as was Mohammedanism, by the sword. Christ told Peter in the garden to put up his sword. That was a final direction for his followers.

They are not coercive. For centuries civil magistrates sought by exactions and penalities to force the religion of Christ upon the consciences of men. Ecclesiastical authorities have tried the same means. Such weapons disgrace and misrepresent our religion and were proscribed by its Founder.

They are not crafty. When men have been prevented from using carnal weapons or coercive, they have fallen back on those that are crafty. They have used false reasoning and philosophy. They have invented mysteries, planted prejudices, played upon men's credulity, employed tricks of rhetoric, the assumptions of priests, or the "claptrap" of all sorts of craftiness. These weapons are all carnal, and they should all be totally disowned by Christians.

Positively. Though not carnal they are mighty. As to efficiency, they are "mighty through God." Our weapons

are the truths of the Gospel," the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God." Used plainly, simply, yet strongly and earnestly, they are absolutely effective in "pulling down the strongholds" of sin and Satan. One of the strongholds of Satan is ignorance. He blinds the eyes of his votaries. Ignorance is essential to the duration of his kingdom. Another of his strongholds is prejudice, which is the general result of ignorance. Pride is another barrier he erects against the salvation of the soul. It is one of the strongest and last to be given up. Mammon is another. Love of this present world, materialism, is indeed one of Satan's most effective strongholds. Unbelief, the rejection of truth is another. But the "sword of the Spirit" is supreme against them all. The stronghold of ignorance is overthrown by the gospel of truth. The stronghold of prejudice is undermined by the simple facts and statements of the gospel. The stronghold of pride is brought low by the revelation of the realities and glories of another world. The stronghold of mammon is reduced to naught by men coming to appreciate the riches that fade not away. The stronghold of unbelief falls before the self-evidencing power of the religion of Christ. The gospel can do all this. It is God's own instrument. It is full of the wisdom and power of God. It is mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds.

III. The victories. What are they? We have already indicated many of them. But let us classify them.

They are mental. Paul is speaking about "imaginations," and things pertaining to the mind. The victories of true soldiership are over mind. It is not much credit to a man to conquer a lion or a bear or some enemy from the animal creation. A man only conquers himself when he conquers his mind. The victories of true soldiership

are mental victories, victories of the supremacy of truth over ignorance, over prejudice, and over unbelief.

They are moral. They are corrective. They are triumphs of right and justice and purity and love. They transform the world. They destroy evil and enthrone the good.

They are spiritual. They are not alone such as make the world a better, happier, safer place to live in. They are more than mental and moral victories, for they are definitely Christian. They are victories won for Christ and the things of Christ. They "bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ." They promote the cause of Christ, the kingdom of Christ, and in their triumphs will ultimately enthrone in universal dominion the King of the kingdom of truth, Christ Himself.

Prayer: "We confess unto thee, O God, how weak we are in ourselves, how powerless to do the work of life, how prone to selfishness and sin. We beseech thee to grant us strength, the strength of thy Spirit, the power of thy Christ, wherein we can do all things. Enable us thus to repress every selfish propensity, every wilful purpose, every unkind feeling, every thought and word and deed of anger and impatience, and to cherish perfect love, constant kindness, to think pure thoughts, to speak gentle words, to do helpful and generous deeds. Raise our minds to the contemplation of thy beloved Son, that, seeing his divine beauty, we may be drawn near unto him, and changed into his image, and empowered to bring every thought into obedience to Christ, into harmony with his Spirit and his immortal life. Amen."

Unite in offering the Lord's Prayer.

DECAPITATED TEMPTATIONS

Motto for the Week: *"Blessed is he that endureth temptation."* James 1:12.

Hymn: *"Yield not to temptation."*—H. R. Palmer.

Scripture: James 1:12-27.

Meditation: *DECAPITATED TEMPTATIONS.*

Text: *"Therefore David ran, and stood upon the Philistine, and took his sword, and drew it out of the sheath thereof, and slew him, and cut off his head therewith."* I Sam. 17:51.

This incident regarding David and Goliath may rightly be used, we think, as a parable teaching us the wisdom and duty of decapitating our temptations. David had won the victory over Goliath, but one act more was needed to make sure. The giant had fallen, but perhaps he was not finished. David would run no risk on this point. With him it was a fight to the finish, and the finish was a decapitated Philistine. This is the sort of victory we ought to accomplish in our battle with our temptations. But too often is this not the way with us?—

I. Sometimes our temptations are only wounded Philistines.

This is a point where we often stop short and fail to carry out and make sure our victory. David did not know but that Goliath might be only stunned by the stone. A half victory is not victory. We often wound a temptation and get it down, but leave it in such a condition that it can

recover, regain its feet, and presently we find it necessary to fight that very same giant again. That this is very poor policy in the spiritual warfare we must all admit.

II. Sometimes our temptations are only frightened Philistines.

Too often it is with us as it would have been with David had he only succeeded in frightening Goliath from the field. We chase temptations off the field, but they live to fight another day. They come back with renewed strength and equipment for the battle, and overcome us in the end. Our victory over a giant is not won and our future made secure until we stand upon its prostrate form, and take its sword, and slay it, and cut off its head.

III. Sometimes our temptations are Philistines compromised with.

Too often we only make a feint at fighting our sins, and are in secret league with them, only too willing to know they are only scotched and not dead. Compromises are dangerous. Many professed Christians provoke temptation; they put themselves in such relations to companions, places, and dissipations as to invite attack. They "set on fire the course of nature," superinduce conflict and the mastery of some giant sin, and then complain of the trials of life. What would you think of the consistency of a boy who should throw stones through a hornet's nest until the air is filled with humming exasperation and flying wrath, and then ask his father to keep the hornets away, appease their anger, or neutralize their sting? Such ventures would be pronounced folly, because it is the nature of such aggravation to punish interference. And let us not whimper about inherited appetites, either; at least not so long as we encourage them by compromise. To Dr. Tanner, while engaged in his famous fast, a visitor said, "Don't you long for dinner and imagine you see a fine breakfast?" The

wiry little Englishman, with a look of great resolution, said, "I don't allow myself to think of such things." Epictetus said that what we ought not to do, we ought not to think of doing. "If you don't mean to trade with Satan, you must keep out of his shop." Never compromise with evil.

IV. David's way with Goliath is the only proper way for us to treat our Philistine enemies of temptation; decapitate them.

The true soldier of righteousness shoots to kill. With him it is war to the death against evil, and he only leaves off when its head is off. Give no quarter to your sins. You have got to down with them or they will down with you. If you do not slay them they will slay you. A wounded temptation may come back upon you, but a decapitated temptation will trouble you no more. Don't try to wound, or frighten or compromise with sin, but cut with the sword and slay it; cut off its head, decapitate, and thus be done with it. This should be the attitude of every Christian toward sin; if not, we are liable at any moment to be overcome of sin.

"To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me on my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father on his throne."

Prayer: "When we are awake, we are still with thee, O God most merciful, and thy hand is over us for good. Be thou the Desire of our hearts, and the Ruler of our thoughts. O heavenly Father, we need thy love and thy calm breath shed around in our souls to be a fountain of strength; we know not without thee what may befall us this day, either of peril, or of temptation, or of sorrow. But thou canst put a guard about our path, and canst fence all our senses from temptation by sobering them

with thy holy fear. Give us, then, we pray thee, a right sense of duty, to shield us in all conflict, and guard us against sin and death. Lead us not into temptation; or, when we are tempted, deliver us by humble watchfulness from all power of evil. We ask through Christ, our Lord and Saviour. Amen."

Unite in offering the Lord's Prayer.

PRESUMPTUOUS SINS

Motto for the Week: *"Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation."* Matt. 26:41.

Hymn: *"My soul be on thy guard."*—George Heath.

Scripture. Rom. 12:1-21.

Meditation: *PRESUMPTUOUS SINS.*

Text: *"Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins."* Psalm 19:13.

All sins are great sins, but some sins are greater than others. David, in this psalm, makes it plain that presumptuous sins are among the chief of sins, ranking among the foremost in the list of iniquities.

I. Among presumptuous sins we would class, first, those against special light and warning. A sin of ignorance is not presumptuous, unless the ignorance itself be willful. When a man sins from want of knowledge of the law, or of reproof, advice or admonition, we do not call that a presumptuous sin. But when one knows what is right, is instructed by an enlightened conscience and God's word, and has also, possibly, the admonition of friends and their wise advice, and still goes on in a wrong way, his sin certainly partakes strongly of the nature of a presumptuous sin.

II. Among the presumptuous sins we would class, secondly, those of special deliberation and design. A man may have a very passionate spirit, and in a moment of hot haste utter an angry word for which he soon repents.

Such a man certainly does not sin presumptuously when suddenly overcome by anger; though, without doubt, there is presumption in his sin unless he strives to correct that passion and keep it down. But the man who carefully plans how an evil is to be done, and Haman-like sets about to build the gallows, the man who digs a pit for his friend to fall into, the man who lays snares in secret and plots wickedness upon his bed, is tremendously guilty. His sins are in the highest degree presumptuous. Such is also the case with men who long continue in any given course of sin, who transgress today and tomorrow and the next day, week after week, year after year, piling up a great mountain of accumulated guilt. Such men sin presumptuously. The reason is because in such a continued repetition or habit of sin there must be definite deliberation. It is the same in the case of sins of design. In the Old Testament there is an account of a man who went out and gathered sticks on the Sabbath day. He was put to death for it. That seemed very severe. But the reason for such punishment was that his sin was a very presumptuous one. The law of the Sabbath had just been proclaimed, "In it thou shalt do no manner of work." But this man wilfully, out of design, in order, as it were, to show that he despised God, without any necessity, went out and performed an act that brought shame upon the whole people. His was a persumptuous sin. And men sometimes sin today out of design, with the deliberate intention to sin.

III. But a more common class of presumptuous sins are sins of hardihood and against wise sentiments of caution. It has been said, "He who has gunpowder about him has need to keep away from sparks." But there are men who play with temptations, who try to rush, with their power-like nature, through the flames.

Sir Walter Scott, in his wanderings through the Highlands of Scotland, fell in with this legend, which has close application to this thought about presumptuous sins. The legend says that a wayfaring man once found himself at the mouth of a great cavern. Impelled by curiosity, he entered and found himself in a large hall where on either side were armed warriors mounted upon their horses, but all buried in slumber. Upon an altar in the middle of the room, lay a sheathed sword and trumpet. The intruder put the trumpet to his lips and blew a resonant blast. Instantly was heard the clashing of armor as the horses and their riders awoke, and the visitor found himself expelled from the cavern by an invisible but irresistible force, and a voice was heard saying, "Fool that did not draw the sword before he blew the trumpet." There are far too many people who make the mistake of blowing the trumpet before they draw the sword. It is guilty presumption when we waken up the enemies of our soul before we are surely prepared to meet them. Too often people put themslves in the way of danger.

We read of a strange lawsuit which was recently decided in England. A man visiting a show found a stable door open and went in and stroked the zebra, whereupon the ungrateful beast let out with his heels and kicked the man through the partition into another stall, where another zebra bit his hand so cruelly that it had to be amputated. The question was whether he could recover damages from the zebra's owner. A jury thought he could, but the Court of Appeals decided not. The learned judges declared that a zebra is legally a wild animal. Now an owner's duty with regard to a wild beast is to keep it secured, so that it may not go about seeking whom it may devour, and this zebra was secured. True, the door was accidentally

left open, and if the visitor had merely gone in and been kicked, he might have recovered damages; but he invited his kicking by stroking the zebra.

How many people there are who fall into sin in the same way. They pray in the morning, "Lead me not into temptation," and then they go carelessly wandering about into the devil's stables, ready to stroke any curious zebra of sin they may find. Oh how many of us there are who need to learn the prayer and to offer it sincerely, "Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins; let them not have dominion over me."

The advice the sainted Bishop Hamline once gave to a boy is good advice for us all. "When in trouble, my boy," said he, "kneel down and ask God's help; but never climb over the fence into the devil's ground, and then kneel down and ask help. Pray from God's side of the fence." Or, as another Christian has said, "If you don't mean to trade with Satan, you must keep out of his shop."

Prayer: "O Lord, succor, we beseech thee, us who are tempted. May nothing induce us to distrust thy care over us, nor to use the gifts to the denial of thee, their Giver. May we never presume upon thy protection when we are forsaking thy paths, and tempting thee. May we never, for the sake of any supposed gain or advancement, quench the testimony of thy Spirit, or prove disloyal to thy service. Do thou so support us in all temptations that, when we have been tried, we may receive the crown of life, which thou hast for them that love thee. We ask all through Christ, our Lord. Amen."

Unite in offering the Lord's Prayer.

THE BEST GIFTS

Motto for the Week: *"Whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, etc., think on these things."* Phil. 4:8.

Hymn: *"Awake, my soul, stretch every nerve."*—Philip Doddridge.

Scripture: Phil. 4:1-23.

Meditation: *THE BEST GIFTS.*

Text: *"Covet earnestly the best gifts."* I Cor. 12:31.

This expression means "be zealous for," or greatly desire, the best, the most useful endowments. Paul had been telling the Corinthian Christians that no one should be proud or elated on account of extraordinary endowments; also, on the other hand, that no one should be depressed, or sad, or discontented because he occupied a humble position. He was endeavoring to repress in them the spirit of discontent and jealousy and ambition and to produce a willingness to occupy the station in which God had placed them. But fearing that they might mistake his meaning, and be too easily satisfied, he says in effect, I do not intend to deny that it is proper to desire the most useful endowments and graces of the Spirit. It is right for you to desire to be qualified for eminent usefulness. But I will show you a more excellent way of manifesting your zeal than by aspiring to the place of apostles, or prophets, or rulers over your brethren—it is by cultivating universal charity, or love. Then follows the wonderful thirteenth chapter of First Cor-

inthians, which so definitely presents love as the greatest thing in the world.

"Covet earnestly the best gifts." What are some of the gifts and graces it is right for us thus eagerly to desire?

I. One, as we have indicated, is the gift of love. To have a warm heart, wide sympathies, unselfish feelings, a desire for the good of others, and the kindly and winsome ways that grow out of these, are graces it were well if we all more eagerly sought. It is through the obtaining of this gift of love the world is to be made better and earth become increasingly like heaven. If completely possessed we would all live out the Golden Rule every day of our lives, and that would bring heaven upon earth.

II. Another is the gift of faith. By this we mean the grace of a calm trust in God. We know of nothing that could more greatly increase the sum of human happiness than for men to come to trust God. Could we but realize that God is love, and all his plans for us love-prompted; that he is wisdom, and his ways of leading us and controlling our lives the very best that could be; that he is strength, and therefore able to make all things work together for our good, how much happier life might be to us all. God is a God of infinite love, infinite wisdom, infinite power—how well we can afford to trust him! Covet earnestly this gift of faith.

III. Another is the gift of knowledge. It is right that we should want to know the best there is in history, the best there is in literature, and the best there is in human learning and knowledge. Is it not still more desirable that we should know as much as possible of God and of the things of the Spirit? Covet earnestly the best gifts, and among them this gift of spiritual intelligence, knowledge of the Bible, and of spiritual experience, and of the ways of God through his acts of providence and mercy.

IV. Another is the gift of beauty. It is right that we should desire to be beautiful, especially with the attractiveness that comes from beauty of soul. This, of course, is the secret of beauty, for soul beauty cannot be hid; it shines out in the face and features, and in the whole poise and attitude of the one who possesses it.

V. To this end we should earnestly desire the gift of fellowship with God. To be much with God is the way to become like God. There is a wonderful soul-transforming power in communion with Christ. This is one of the reasons why we should seek to be with him more, come into closer relationship with him, know his mind, drink in his spirit, study his character, ponder his words.

VI. Therefore still another gift earnestly to be desired is the gift of truth. It is right that we should desire to know truth just as deeply and widely as possible. This means that we should learn to think. How many people there are in the world who do almost no thinking; there is nothing about their faces or features to indicate that they have ever studied deeply, no lines of thought or marked intelligence. We should seek to know as much of all truth as we can; but especially of the highest manifestations of truth in its spiritual aspects. All truth is the truth of God. He is truth—the source of truth. Let us regard all truth as sacred, but let us seek especially to know Him and about Him who is "the way and the truth and the life."

VII. One other gift we mention worthy of being so eagerly desired—the gift of righteousness. It is an endowment that may be cultivated and increased. Let us earnestly seek to be right and do right—to have characters patterned after Christ's character, and to live a life of holiness and gracious benefit to others like his life was.

Prayer: "O Almighty God, help us to put away all bitterness and wrath and evil-speaking, with all malice. May we possess our souls in patience, however we are tempted and provoked, and not be overcome with evil, but overcome evil with good. Enable us, O God of patience, to bear one another's burdens, and to forbear one another in love. Oh, teach and help us all to live in peace and to love in truth, following peace with all men and walking in love, as Christ loved us, of whom let us learn such meekness and lowliness of heart that in Him we may find rest for our souls. Subdue all bitter resentments in our minds, and let the law of kindness be in our tongues, and a meek and quiet spirit in all our lives. Make us so gentle and peaceable that we may be followers of thee as dear children, that thou, the God of peace, mayest dwell with us forevermore. We ask through Christ. Amen."

Offer together the Lord's Prayer.

REASONS FOR THANKSGIVING

Motto for the Week: *"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits."* Ps. 103:2.

Hymn: *"Praise to God, immortal praise."*—Anna L. Barbauld.

Scripture: Psalm 147:1-20.

Meditation: *REASONS FOR THANKSGIVING.*

Text: *"O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good; for his mercy endureth forever. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so."* Ps. 107:1, 2.

The theme of this Psalm is gratitude for enduring mercies. Gratitude is a grace that struggles for expression. It does not shut itself up in the heart. It does not allow itself to be merely felt. It wants to speak. It wants to say something. The writer of the psalm shows us that he thinks well of this tendency to give expression to grateful feeling; yes, that he regards it as a duty. He says, Let those who are among the redeemed of the Lord, those who have experienced God's mercies, those who have tasted of his goodness,—let them, "say so." Let them give voice to, recount the number of their favors and their grateful feelings in regard to them. "O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good; for his mercy endureth forever. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so."

Giving thanks to God for his mercies is always a comely thing for us to do; but especially at this period of our

national Thanksgiving season ought we to stir ourselves all the more to this delightful duty.

I. A first reason is the one we have mentioned, that the very fact of having received gifts from God's good hand makes it our duty to express thanks. "Saying so" is a far more present and pressing duty than many people think. This is true in our human relations of every day life. In hard fought campaigns it is customary for commanders to make mention of men who have distinguished themselves for bravery and service. It is not to minister to pride or to flatter them. It is to fulfill an obligation. The officer could not content himself with merely thinking well of the prowess of those who have done nobly. The country thinks it right that the soldier who has stood in the bloody front of battle and has vindicated his valor and patriotism should receive grateful recognition. For both reward and inspiration both the commander and the country believe that it is as little as can be done where a man deserves praise to "say so."

A young artist showed a picture to which he had devoted his very best efforts to a great master. He stood breathless waiting for the master to speak. When the time seemed longer than he could possibly wait he turned to the great artist and cried, "O speak; say something; say anything!" Deep in the heart of the young artist was the natural but almost inexpressible desire to have the master, if he liked his picture, "say so."

That was a strikingly human and pathetic appeal a young boy made to his father, when he cried, "I often do wrong, I know, and then you scold me, and I deserve it; but, father, sometimes I do my best to do right! Won't you let me know that I do please you?" Sometimes our children need reproof and repression, but much more often

they need and will respond better to kind words of encouragement and appreciation. Let the discriminating parent, pleased with the child's progress in any right direction "say so."

A mother was dying. Every thought had been for her children. By wonderful industry and good management she sent her boys to college, her girls to school and gave them marked advantages. But by and by she was stricken with mortal illness, brought on by over-work. The children gathered around her bedside. The oldest son took her in his arms. He said, "You have been a good mother to us." That did not seem much to say, did it? But it was much to her, to whom words of praise had been all too sparingly given. A flush came over her pallid face, and with husky voice she whispered, "My son, you never said so before!"

Oh how many mothers, and wives, and teachers, and clerks, and pastors, and church workers, and porters, and conductors, and trustees, and city officials, and soldiers, and sailors, and servants, and children, and people generally there are who are longing to hear some one "say so"—express some word of satisfaction, appreciation and grateful praise!

If parents, on a Christmas morning, like to hear the children in another room talking about their presents and of how good and kind father and mother and friends have been to them, need we wonder if our heavenly Father is pleased when he hears us express appreciation of and gratitude for his benefits? The very fact that our blessings come from God's good hand makes it our duty to give thanks. "O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good; for his mercy endureth forever. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so." Why return thanks unto God for mercies if they have not come from him? If Thanksgiving Day means

anything it means that we say to God, Our blessings are from Thee and unto Thee do we now return thanks.

II. But not only should we give thanks to God because he is the giver of our blessings, but we have much additional reason so to do when we consider the great abundance of them. We are all too much prone to forget God's benefits. We have excellent memories for all our trials and sorrows and losses, but fail to recall our blessings. It seems that the very abundance of God's favors and their ever unbroken flow tend to make us all the more forgetful of the Giver of them all. But it is our duty to remember, to be thankful. So doing we will soon find ourselves ready to adopt the words of the Psalmist and say: "How many are thy gracious thoughts to me O Lord! How great is the sum of them! When I count them they are more in number than the sand."

We have read of a father who one winter's night was walking along, hurrying home, with his little daughter at his side. Suddenly she said to him, "Father, I am going to count the stars." "Very well," said he, "go on." By and by he heard her counting—"Two hundred and twenty-three, two hundred and twenty-four, two hundred and twenty-five. O, dear," she said, "I had no idea there were so many."

Ah, fellow Christian, have you never said in your soul, "Now, Master, I am going to count thy benefits," and soon found your heart sighing, not with sorrow, but burdened with goodness, and you saying to yourself, "I had no idea that there were so many"?

"Count the mercies! Count the mercies!
Number all the gifts of love;
Keep the daily, faithful record
Of the comforts from above.

Look at all the lovely green spots
In life's weary desert way;
Think how many cooling fountains
Cheer our fainting hearts each day.
Count the mercies! Count the mercies!
See them strewn along our way!"

Prayer: "For days of health, for nights of quiet sleep; for seasons of bounty and of beauty, for all earth's contributions to our need through this past year; Good Lord, we thank thee. For our country's shelter; for our homes; for the joy of faces, and the joy of hearts that love; for the power of great examples; for holy ones who lead us in the ways of life and love; for our powers of growth; for longings to be better and do more; for ideals that ever rise above our real; for opportunities well used; for opportunities unused; and even those misused; Good Lord, we humbly thank thee. For our temptations, and for any victory over sins that close beset us; for the gladness that abides with loyalty and the peace of the return; for the blessedness of service and the power to fit ourselves to others' needs; for our necessities to work; for burdens, pain, and disappointments, means of growth; for sorrow; for death; for all that brings us nearer to each other, nearer to ourselves, near to thee; for Life; we thank Thee, O our Father. Amen."

Repeat the Lord's Prayer in unison.

JOYFUL THANKSGIVING

Motto for the Week: *"Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits."* Psalm 103:2.

Hymn: *"Come, ye thankful people, come."*—Henry Alford.

Scripture: Psalm 146:1-10.

Meditation: *JOYFUL THANKSGIVING.*

Text: *"But thus saith the Lord that created thee,"* etc. Isa. 42:1-13.

These verses are filled with wonderful promises and many reasons for thanksgiving on the part of the ancient Jews. Our reasons for thanksgiving, personal and national, are as many. Without following more closely the verses let us think of some of our reasons for joyful thanksgiving.

I. Thank God for life. Carlyle has somewhere said: "Every man should put himself at zero, and then reckon every degree ascending from that point as an occasion for thanks." That is the true standard. Precisely on this scale does the Bible compute our mercies. Every step we take from where conscious unworthiness would consign us should call for our offering of gratitude. "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed." Why should a living man complain?" So begins the anthem of thanks. It starts at the lowest note of all: "We are alive. We are not consumed." Whatever we may think of our hardships and deprivations, we are all far above the extreme point, and

therefore have much occasion for thanksgiving. A writer in the *Quiver* well expresses this thought. He says: "I felt most ill-used because a slight accident had disabled my right hand. Taking a walk through crowded streets, I met one man with a leg deficient, another without the usual number of arms, a blind woman, a girl with her face terribly disfigured, two deaf and dumb men, an old man with a 'churchyard cough', two funerals, and a van of prisoners. Having passed these, and come to a lunatic asylum, I made up my mind that I should be very thankful that I was not as badly off as thousands of more deserving people."

II. Not only are we alive, but what a woundrous life it is we are permitted to live! It is not the life of an animal. A man alive! Can you find in all the works of God a being which surpasses him? He stands upon the earth, but his eyes need not be earthward bent. His is the upward look, the onward march, the glorious future. It is a grand, a glorious, a divine gift, this pulsing, throbbing, mastering, glowing life we live. To live, to be conscious, to think, to solve problems, to read the pages of nature and to reverently turn over the pages that reveal God, to believe that this is not all of life, but that above things animate and inanimate it is to endure forever, the immortal spark never to be quenched, the immortal world never to disappear, for all this, included in the one fact of life, shall we not evermore give thanks?

III. Our gratitude is due also because of the age in which we live. The mists of superstition have almost disappeared. The darkness of ignorance no longer envelopes us. We have got out of the Egyptian night into the clear, crisp morning of liberty.

And this liberty includes liberty to worship, and liberty of the Church to foster and educate and cultivate in men

the spirit of worship. When compared with her condition in many years of the past the Church of Christ has much to be thankful for. Now and then we hear rumors of the decadence of the Church. We are told that she is losing her influence and vitality. But this rumor, far more the expression of a wish than the statement of a fact, is not true. The fact is that the Church never did better work than it is doing today. The pulpit never more honestly declared the truth than it is declaring it today; and the Church is getting at the mind and the heart of the world as never before.

Fifty years ago a Mr. F. Hall was editor of the New York *Commercial Advertiser*. A Christian gentleman paid advertising rates for space in that paper to fill with religious reading matter. When at the end of the year the man came to renew his contract the editor told him that the religious matter had proved so interesting to his readers that he would furnish the space free. Fifty years ago one must pay advertising rates to get religious matter into a secular newspaper. Today the great dailies print column after column of sermons, and International Sunday-school lessons, and reports about missions and missionaries and of the church life and work. No, the world is not losing interest in the Christian religion, and for this fact let the Church be thankful.

Let us cultivate more the spirit of thankfulness. Archbishop Trench speaks of a tribe in Brazil in whose language there is neither the word nor the idea of "thanks." God forbid that a like fact should ever come to pass in our language. As Spurgeon in his quaint way puts it: "Even the little chick never takes a drink of water without looking up and giving thanks!" Let us not fail to look up and recognize God as the giver of every good.

Get the habit of thanksgiving. There is a beautiful legend of a golden organ in an ancient monastery. Once the monastery was besieged by robbers who desired to carry off its treasures. The monks took the organ to the river which flowed close by and sank it in the deep water in order to keep it from the hands of the robbers. And the legend is that though buried thus in the river, the organ still continued to give forth sweet enchanting music, which was heard by those who came near.

Every Christian life should be like this golden organ. Nothing should ever silence its music. Even when the floods of sorrow or disappointment flow over it, it should still continue to rejoice and sing. We should have the habit of thanksgiving. We should cultivate the habit. Some people are never grateful to God. Some are grateful when things go well. But God is always good and his dealings with us are good. To be grateful one day in the year cannot make up for three hundred and sixty-four days of ingratitude. Every day should be a Thanksgiving Day.

It is said that in Africa there is a fruit called the "taste berry," because it changes a person's taste so that everything eaten tastes sweet and pleasant. Sour fruit, even if eaten several hours after the "taste berry," becomes sweet and delicious. Gratitude is the "taste berry" of Christianity, and when our hearts are filled with gratitude, nothing that God sends us seems unpleasant to us. Sorrowing heart, sweeten your grief with gratitude. Burdened soul, lighten your burden by singing God's praises. Disappointed one, make your disappointment his appointment by a thankful spirit. Lonely one, dispel your loneliness by making others grateful. Sick one, grow strong in soul thanking God that he loves you enough to chasten you. Keep the "taste berry" of gratitude in your hearts,

and it will do for you what the "taste berry" of Africa does for the African.

O that the grumbler, the pessimist, the chronic complainer might acquire the "thank you habit." The "thank you" spirit should girdle the globe and ascend towards heaven. Earth would be brighter and heaven would bend with its burden of blessings to enrich grateful hearts.

Prayer: "Heavenly Father, give us grace to note thy little gifts. There are so many of them; and the stream is so constant. What pleasures thou hast stored up for us, and dost pass over to us, in the flowers, the sunshine, the morning breeze, the pleasures of the table, of books, of pictures, of sleep and waking, of friendly greetings, of happy relations with our fellows! Not a moment passes without its ministries from thee, gently dropping into our else dreary lives. Give us grace to count our blessings, and not our vexations. Let the satisfaction and joy of a thankful spirit possess us. Keep us from discrediting thy kind providence by sour looks and whining speech. So fill us with thine own great contentment, Lord Jesus, that we cannot but generate sunshine wherever we walk, and thus bring cheer to the disheartened. Even our smallest joys and pleasures, Lord, we would have and use for the benefit of others, not of self. Let there be nothing narrow or petty in our lives, our thoughts, our feelings; nothing mean; nothing so untrue to facts as a sad heart and gloomy mien; nothing so unworthy as a spirit perpetually discontented and uneasy. Thou hast invited us to rest and peace and joy; we would take thee at thy word, and by thy grace would so live that our very looks, our tone of voice, our constant behavior, shall speak thy praise and prove a lure to all we meet to draw them to thee. Amen."

Offer the Lord's Prayer together.

LOST SECRETS AND AN OPEN SECRET

Motto for the Week: *"Godliness with contentment is great gain."* I Tim. 6:6.

Hymn: *"In heavenly love abiding."*—Anna L. Waring.

Scripture: Matt. 6:24-34.

Meditation: *LOST SECRETS AND AN OPEN SECRET.*

Text: *"For I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content."* Phil. 4:11.

Forty years ago an Italian priest, named Luigi Taranti, discovered a method of making stained glass, the coloring of which was declared to be equal to that made by the ancients, whose secret has been lost. Taranti abandoned holy orders and set to work to execute the hundreds of commissions he received, in the secrecy of his workshop at Ostia, near Rome. The finest stained glass windows in Italy were made by him, and he guarded his secret well, for when a year later, he was found dead of blood-poisoning set up by the pigments he employed, it was realized that he had carried the secret with him. The cleverest workmen were called in to examine the pigments, but they one and all failed to penetrate the dead man's secret.

The only man who has yet been successful in taking photographs in color was a martyr to his discovery, the secret of which is lost. Some years ago Dr. Herbert Franklin,

of Chicago, submitted a number of colored photographs—of a somewhat crude nature it is true—to the leading American scientific institutions, and the encouragement he received was such that he built himself a laboratory, proof against the wiles of spies, at the cost of $12,000, wherein to perfect his invention. In the preparation of his plates he used a charcoal fire, and one day when at work he omitted to open the ventilators, and was found asphyxiated. He had refrained from divulging his secret to anyone, and in consequence, although some partially finished plates that hid the secret remained, the way they were prepared is a problem that has baffled scientists to this day.

A man who discovered how to make fulminite, an explosive that would have revolutionized warfare, and to whom the German government offered the equivalent of one hundred thousand dollars for his invention, unexpectedly came to his death in an explosion in his laboratory and the secret is a lost one.

There are, indeed, many lost secrets; but it was not a lost secret but an open secret the Apostle Paul was writing about when he said, "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content." "Godliness with contentment is great gain." Piety connected with a contented mind, a mind free from fret and worry and complaint at the allotment of Providence, a mind trustful and calm and satisfied with God's will, this is the highest possible riches, the greatest gain. But we must remember that this is not something that comes to us in a natural way. It is indeed a secret to be learned. When Paul says that he had "learned" it, he means that he had "gotten into the secret of it." The exact meaning is that he had been initiated into it, by some sort of an experience, somewhat like a person joining a secret society. He used the exact Greek word denoting the celebrated and secret rites of initiation into the Elusin-

ian mysteries, required of Athenian citizens. Into the mystery of Christian contentment every citizen of Christ's kingdom should desire to be initiated. It was death to reveal one of those Elusinian secrets; but this is an "open secret" into which every one may enter. Commercial secrets are sometimes kept, like the process of making kodak films, or for manufacturing Russia iron, but this secret is free to all—how to be rich without money—how to attain the wealth of Christian contentment.

I. First, get over the thought that simply to be rich is to be happy. There is, to be sure, no virtue in being poor, and it is a very convenient thing to have wealth; but there is no standard by which a man can conclude when he is really rich, and wealth in itself has no inherent power to make a single mortal of us happy.

II. Neither does happiness consist in fame and worldly honors as so many seem to think. "Uneasy lies the head that wears a crown." Goethe had wealth and genius, yet he says he never experienced five weeks of genuine pleasure. Burke said: "I would not give a peck of refuse wheat for all that men call fame."

III. Neither is happiness found in the pursuit of pleasure. Indeed, happiness sought is seldom found. Happiness sought for happiness' sake is never obtained. Happiness is found indirectly. If you seek happiness you will find it not. Do your duty in life and happiness will come of itself.

IV. What, then, is the secret of Christian contentment —of real happiness?

Make the least of your little lacks. A man of really good circumstances once said: "I look at what I have not and count myself unhappy. Others look at what I have and count me happy." Look at what you have, and make the

least of your little lacks. Make the most of your little enjoyments. In this way you will get "the peace that springs from the large aggregate of little things." "Be content with such things as you have," says the apostle. That is, "Enter upon the enjoyment of your present blessings." Make the most of the enjoyments you have and do not worry about those you have not.

Do your best with your little duties. They contain the principle of true service; they are the makeup of the most of our lives, and by them we shall be judged at the last.

Make the least of your little lacks; make the most of your present enjoyments; do the best with your little duties, and then, lastly, "Trust in God and do the right." These are the open secrets to a happy life. It is a happy fact that while we cannot all be money rich we can all be millionaires of mind and of heart, of character and of faith, possessing that godliness which with contentment is great gain. May we be so supremely happy as to learn Paul's secret and come into this rich possession.

Prayer: "Almighty God, forbid that we should become so familiar with thy goodness as to be indifferent to it; may thy mercy be a daily surprise; may the tenderness of the living and loving God amaze us by an unexpected revelation. Thus may we live in sweet excitement, in well-controlled rapture, in that elevation of soul which is the best preparation for the service of others. Enrich us with all wisdom; give us enlargement and penetration of understanding; help thy Church so to read the signs of the times as to know what Israel ought to do, and when thy Church knows its duty, may it throw away all fear and selfish calculation, and with the courage of righteousness, go forth under the banners of God. All we ask is in the name of Christ, our Lord. Amen."

Offer the Lord's Prayer in unison.

SPIRITUAL POVERTY.

Motto for the Week: *"Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread?"* Isa. 55:2.

Hymn: *"Jesus, I my cross have taken."*—Henry F. Lyte.

Scripture: Revelation 3:1-22.

Meditation: *SPIRITUAL POVERTY.*

Text: *"Behold, I stand at the door and knock,"* etc. Rev. 3:20.

Two travelers met in the East and talked for a few moments on religious themes. The next summer they met, quite unexpectedly, at the Keswick Conference. The first, who was a clergyman, said to the other, somewhat impulsively: "What brought you to Keswick?" His answer was: "Poverty, spiritual poverty!"

I. The fact of the common prevalence of spiritual poverty.

It is not true that every one realizes his spiritual poverty. Like the Laodiceans, we may think that we are rich and increased in goods and have need of nothing, when in fact we are miserable and poor and blind and naked. Spiritual poverty may be a fact, whether discovered or not. And looking within, what we know as self-examination, does not always reveal it. Spiritual stocktaking does not always discover it. We find it out not through the false and flattering witness of our hearts, but by listening to the faithful and infallible witness of Christ. Therefore in seeking to know

our own selves we must not limit our look to an inward glance. We must seek to know Christ's estimate of us. He is the "Amen," the faithful, trustworthy witness. He says: "I know thy works. I, and I only, know." Therefore we must look to him and say, "Search me, O God, and when thou hast searched me, tell me what thou hast found." We make wrong estimates ever of ourselves. We do not really know our selves. He knows our works and our condition. We must, therefore, apply to him.

The secret of life is to know what is behind phenomena, both in the natural world and in the spiritual world. Back of our wrong estimates of our spiritual condition often is lukewarmness. Tepid water is insipid, it is nauseating. Insipid Christians are not acceptable to Christ. Those who are vacillating, who constantly compromise between the self-life and the Christ-life, make themselves loathsome to our Lord, and he comes to a point where he cannot bear them, is about to cast them from him. To be neither for Christ nor against Christ, to be neither hot nor cold, is to ruin one's spiritual life, to grow in spiritual poverty and offensiveness.

The self-deceived and lukewarm life is quite likely to result also in spiritual pride. "Thou sayest I am rich." You think you have need of nothing. "Thou knowest not" —what? That thou art a wretched Christian—that thou art a pitiable Christian—that thou art a "beggarly" Christian. That is the literal meaning of the word "poor." That thou art a blind Christian, a naked Christian! Oh, how the Holy Spirit takes away all the tinsel of our deceptive wealth, and shows us as we really are!

II. The remedy for our spiritual poverty? Buy gold. Repent of having made other investments, and for the sin and folly of it, and heed God's counsel to buy gold that has been tried in the fire. The tinsel we have been deal-

ing with will not stand the test. Pure gold will. Then, too, be clothed; put on the white garment of Christ's righteousness, that the shame of thy nakedness be not manifested.

Use eye salve. "Anoint thine eyes with eye salve that thou mayest see." Take a different view of things. See right. See straight. Form right estimates of things.

Invite Christ as a guest. He stands at the door and knocks. Let him in. Invite him to the throne of your heart to cleanse it, to rule it, to take the government of it upon his own shoulders.

Listen to Christ's voice. "He that hath an ear let him hear." To be able clearly to distinguish the tones of his voice is very important. After you become familiar with a friend's tones, you will hear them in the midst of a crowded street—anywhere; but first of all we must learn to recognize them. The reason so many people declare that God is silent is simply because they have never learned to recognize his voice when he speaks. They are never conscious of being alone with him. Perhaps they pray. They may talk with God, may tell him many things. But they forget that there is such a thing as allowing God to speak and tell us things. "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear him." He whispers into the ears of those who listen. "Be still and know that I am God." We do not keep still enough. There would be no difficulty about recognizing God's voice if we were more quiet, more willing to listen. This is a very noisy world. One is liable to become bewildered in the din and confusion of modern life, with its multiplicity of interests. Many Christians have lost that beautiful experience of which the Psalmist spoke, of "delighting themselves in God." We do not open the door and invite God in as we should. Unless we are hospitable, we can not have the privilege of entertaining a heavenly guest.

There are many reasons why the door is not opened. Some of us are afraid to open it. Notwithstanding the gracious tones of him who seeks admission, the prospect of having him inside is not a reassuring one. We are afraid that he will not approve of all that he will see. And most of us have good reasons to be ashamed of the appearance of the room. Though it may not be a fit place for One so high and holy, let us never keep the Master standing outside because it does not seem suitable for him.

Then, too, when God enters a human life he comes not as a formal guest. We are too apt to treat him as such, because of his dignity and because of our sense of unworthiness. But he comes to sup with us. That is, he comes seeking intimate fellowship. It is to this holy relationship Christ seeks to enter; not to be treated as company, as we ordinarily use that word, but to be given the freedom and to enjoy the intimacy which we extend to those whom we most love.

There are some people who never hear God's voice. The tone of his appeal is too low, too sweet, too tender, and they are living in such a rush of noise and din. Others there are who hear his voice, recognize his tones, but are either unwilling or else ashamed to have him enter their lives. Still another class open the door and bid him enter, and treat him as they would an occasional visitor, they are formal and distant and uncommunicative. It is only when without conscious effort, but simply and naturally, we feel that Christ is perfectly at home with us and we with him that we gain the real joy and benefit of his presence and all our spiritual poverty is overcome. Open the door. Let him in. The presence of such a guest will make you rich.

Prayer: "O Lord, thy mercy is great, it extendeth over all thy works, it endureth forever, it becomes tender mercy

by long uses and great endurance, and thy kindness becomes loving kindness, the very bloom and fragrance of love. May we enter into the sanctuary of thine heart, and find rest there, having entered by the living door, the living Christ. How precious are thy thoughts unto us! They are not of the earth earthly; they fill all heaven, they reveal infinity, they dwell upon the sublimities of the eternal state, and whilst we follow thy thoughts we are lifted up in noblest elevation and forgetting earth and time and space we see heaven opened and the whole creation gathered in worship round the feet of Christ. Let us also gather there and receive the rich blessing of thy Fatherhood. Amen."

Unite in offering the Lord's Prayer.

GOD MADE VISIBLE IN CHRIST

Motto for the Week: *"Glory to God in the highest."* Luke 2:14.

Hymn: *"Hark! the herald angels sing."*—Rev. C. Wesley.

Scripture: Matt. 2:1-11.

Christmas Meditation: *GOD MADE VISIBLE IN CHRIST.*

Text: *"No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared him."* John 1:18.

God is invisible. No human eyes have seen him. It is not meant to deny that men have seen manifestations of God, as when he appeared to Moses or to the prophets. But it is certain that no man has seen the essence of God, or has fully known him. God is made visible in Christ. We know him most perfectly through Christ.

Suppose some Eastern king were to send us a picture painted by himself, we should know something of him,—of his knowledge, skill, and love of beauty. But if he were to send a long, delightfully written, kind letter, we should know him better. But if he should send upon a visit to us his son, very much like himself, we should know him best. In all three of these ways God has revealed himself to us. The world is a great picture painted by God. Or, to change the figure, suppose you visit a great factory and see order everywhere. It shows that the man who planned and built and arranged such a place had an orderly mind. So in the

universe God has made there is order, and wisdom, and power, and beauty, and goodness manifested as well, and all telling us of God and revealing him to us. Then, too, the Bible is a letter from God, a long and loving letter to us revealing his very heart, how he thinks of us and what he would have us to be and to do. This is a very much fuller revelation than Nature can make. But Jesus Christ is God's Son, and if we want to know most perfectly what God is like we must study Jesus. It was to give us this inestimable opportunity that God sent him into the world nearly two thousand years ago, and it is this blessed fact which each recurring Advent season should recall to all hearts and minds.

It is related of a wise Eastern ruler that when he died he left word to his people that his son would be their king, and though they had never seen his face, they would judge of his government by his acts. The people promised obedience. The influence of the new ruler was wise and kind, and like the beams of the sun, it streamed out of the royal palace, bringing joy to every subject. The people marveled and said: "We see him not; how does he understand us so well?" They came to the palace gates and said, "Let the king suffer us to see his face." The king came forth to them in his royal robes, and when they saw him they rejoiced and said, "We know thy face." He had walked so often with them as their friend, showing love and kindness to all, that when they saw him in the palace, his kingly robes did not disguise him. They knew him.

This is our Christmas day thought; for this is what Christmas really means. In the incarnation our King comes to the palace gate and lets us see his face. "The word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld his glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." God was in the world before, ruling in love

and wisdom. We did not recognize or know him; but we felt his power and received of his grace. He was among us, as we might say, incognito. He was with us all the while ruling and defending us, conquering all his and our enemies—our loving, wise and ever-mindful King. But in the incarnation of Christ he revealed himself; he made himself visible to us; he permitted us to realize who the one that had been our benefactor really was, and something of the depth of the love he felt. At this glad Christmas season may we see our King at his palace gate.

I. Jesus manifests God, therefore, in his person. He is his "only begotten Son." His home is "in the bosom of the Father." Jesus had a knowledge of God, of his nature and character and designs, such as no other one ever possessed, and which qualified him, therefore, above all others, to make God known. "The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us." Christ was "God manifest in the flesh." Christ, dwelling among men , they beheld in him "the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

In the Rospigliosi Palace, in Rome, is Guido Reni's great picture of Aurora. It is on the ceiling and can be studied only with great difficulty from the floor. But a mirror is so placed on a table that it reflects the picture, and one can study it there with ease and pleasure. God is a Spirit; and he is in heaven, "dwelling in light unapproachable." But the incarnation, which we so gladly celebrate at the Christmas season, was the bringing of the reflection of the glorious person of God down to earth in a human form and life. Men looked at Jesus and saw in him the very reflection of God, "the express image of his person."

Some one has well said: "In looking at the sun, through a telescope, if we use unstained glass the eye will be burned to the socket, and we shall see nothing; but if we employ a colored medium we can examine it with safety. So no

man can see God and live. But if we contemplate him through Christ; that is, if we come to him through the medium of humanity, we behold him without being destroyed; nay, the sight of him imparts salvation to us; for we behold his glory as that of the Only Begotten, and lo! He is 'full of grace and truth.'"

II. Jesus manifests God also by his life and character. "He hath declared him." The obvious meaning of these words is not so much that Jesus has told us or taught us verbally who and what God is—though he did do that—but that in his own person and life and character he is the silent, inarticulate manifestation of God to the world. As some one has said: "A child may declare or describe to you the appearance and character of his father; a pupil may tell you of his teacher; an author may give an account of himself in his book; but there may be in each of these cases an involuntary and indirect description, much more emphatic than the direct one. For in his writings the author, especially if he be an earnest writer, unconsciously portrays himself, so that we may know as much of the heart and soul of a favorite author by familiarity with his books as if we had lived for years in personal intercourse with him. So the pupil has caught the revered master's manner; or the child bears, not only in his person, but in his temper, habits, sentiments, prevailing tone of thought and feeling, a strong family-likeness to the parent; and though there may be much in the father which, from inferiority of talents or attainments, the child may be inadequate to represent, yet, according to his measure, he may convey to us a better idea of what the father is than by any express and formal description of him we could attain." Just so it is in this case, Jesus is the revelation of the invisible God. Both by his person and especially by his life and character he manifested God to men.

III. Jesus manifests God also by his sufferings and death. In his coming to earth he revealed the person of God. In his life and character he revealed the purity and righteousness of God. But it was especially in his sufferings and death that he revealed the heart of God—his mercy and grace and his yearning love. We do not really know God until we see Christ on the cross and realize that it was from love, due to his own and his Father's love for us, that he hung and suffered there. At this Advent season let us not fail to see, in the light of the cross, something of the great love wherewith God has loved us and all men. Nothing could make our Christmas a happier one, or cause more blessings to flow out from us to the world—to the unnumbered multitudes of this great human-world for which Christ came and lived and died. As Christ came to reflect God, let us, in turn, try to be reflectors of Christ, that he may be glorified in us.

Prayer: "Our Heavenly Father, we thank thee for the Christmas season with all its gifts and gladness. We thank thee for the love in so many hearts that finds expression in gifts and good-will; for home gatherings and reunions of separated ones; for home joys and social festivities; and for all the gladness that brightens the weary world in this Christmas time. May we know that all these blessings are showered upon us by the hand of the Babe of Bethlehem, and that it is his Spirit working in humanity that is transforming our modern world. May not the abundance of material gifts smother the spiritual significance of the day, and the gifts cause us to forget the real Giver. Move us with generous impulses to share our good things with others, and may the Spirit of Christ touch our lives with a new spirit of love and joy that will bless and make beautiful all our days. And this we ask in his name. Amen." Offer the Lord's Prayer together.

THE DAYSPRING FROM ON HIGH

Motto for the Week: *"Glory to God in the Highest and on earth peace, good will toward men."* Luke 2:14.

Hymn: *"Joy to the world! the Lord is come."*—Isaac Watts.

Scripture: Luke 1:67-80.

Meditation: *THE DAYSPRING FROM ON HIGH.*

Text: *"The dayspring from on high hath visited us."* Luke 1:78.

Did you see Halley's comet? Have you ever heard how the astronomers pass the word along when one of their number finds a new comet or catches sight of an old one returning from its spacious wanderings? It is this way. There exists among the astronomers a regular organization for this purpose. It is world-wide and has two centers, one in Europe and one in America. The American center is Harvard University.

If, we will say, at the Lick Observatory in California, one of these mysterious celestial objects is discerned some night the fortunate discoverer will at once telegraph to Cambridge, giving its position in the heavens. As soon as the orbit can be learned the facts about this also are sent to Harvard. Both reports are at once sent from Harvard under the ocean as fast as lightning can carry them, to the European central station at Kiel, in Germany. From Harvard and Kiel the information is distributed by telegraph to the observatories of Europe and America. Thus, no

matter what the weather may be at one place or at many, there will always be a number of trained eyes with their powerful lenses as aids, fastened upon the heavenly visitor, who will be under constant observation until he sees fit to leave our solar system and fly beyond the range of our prying telescopes.

For the sake of cheapness and accuracy a code is used in sending these messages, and at the end of each message, to serve as a check, a "control word" is given, a word that represents a number which is the mean of all numbers used in the message. It is interesting to know how much pains the scientific men take to get at these facts about invisible bodies floating aimlessly around in distant space—a knowledge not likely to be of the least use to anybody, if that can safely be said concerning any knowledge whatever.

But as we relate these plans of the wise men we are led to wonder whether we are half as eager to spread abroad over the world the infinitely important good news which was proclaimed out of the opening heavens two thousand years ago—the news of the advent of Christ, the Saviour!

The song of Zacharias, which suggests our Christmas meditation, is an exceedingly beautiful and meaningful song. It expresses with exactness and elegance the chief points of the plan of salvation, the doings of Christ's forerunner, and the mercy and motive of God in providing for our redemption. "The Dayspring from on high hath visited us."

I. These words well express the joy of Christ's advent. This joy, this blessedness, is set forth under the idea of the rising sun. "The Dayspring from on high hath visited us." The word "day-spring" is defined as "the dawn," "the beginning of day," or "the first appearance of the light." It is found quite frequently in the New Tes-

tament, but it is rendered by the word "East." It is much like our word "Orient," which really signifies the place of sunrise. "We have seen His star in the east" is a form of saying, "We saw His star in the Day-spring." Our version is very happy in the use of the syllable "spring." In the land of Palestine there is almost no such thing as twilight. The sun comes out from behind the hills quite abruptly and is all on hand at once for the ordinary day's work of flooding the world with light.

The worth of Christ to the world and the joy of his advent is frequently set forth in the Scriptures under the idea of the rising sun, or star, or a light in the world. In Numbers he is spoken of as the "Star of Jacob." In Isaiah it is prophetically said: "The people that have walked in darkness have seen a great light." In Malachi it is said: "The Sun of Righteousness shall arise with healing in his wings." Similar descriptions are given in the New Testament by John the Baptist, who was sent to bear witness that "that was the true light," by Christ Himself, who said, "I am the light of the world;" by Peter, who spoke of the "Day star's rise in our hearts," and in the Revelation, where Christ is spoken of as "the bright and morning star" and "the light of the New Jerusalem." What intense joy is implied when it is said: "The Dayspring from on high hath visited us."

We have read that near the North Pole, the night lasting for months, when the people expect the day is about to dawn some messengers go up to the highest point to watch, and when they see the first streak of day they put on their brightest possible apparel, and embrace each other and say, "Behold the sun!" and the cry goes around the land, "Behold the sun!" The world was in darkness. Long centuries had the people lain in ignorance and in sin. The cry of Zacharias was the joyful one: "Behold the Sun!"

"Behold the Sun of Righteousness is rising with healing in his wings!" "The Dayspring from on high hath visited us!"

II. These words well express the purpose of Christ's coming. It was to give light. What the sun is in the material world that Christ is to us in the spiritual world. He is the author, the source of light. As the face of nature revives or withers according as the influence of the sun is increased or diminished, so the soul of man continues dead or is quickened according as the Sun of Righteousness withholds or imparts his invigorating rays. He hath visited our benighted world.

"The whole world was lost in the darkness of sin,
The light of the world is Jesus."

A band of fugitives were crossing an Eastern desert. The night was dark, but they determined to push on. Soon they lost their way and had to spend the night in anxiety and fear. It seemed as if the night would never pass. But almost all at once the sun rose, bringing daylight and showing the way of safety. Not one of them ever forgot that sun rising. So to the people of the world in their wanderings. They were lost—lost in the darkness of sin. But the Dayspring from on high hath visited us, hath risen upon us, making plain the way of eternal safety. Christ is the dawn, Christ is our Dayspring, and the purpose of his coming was to give us the light that would lead us to eternal bliss.

III. But what is the source of all this blessedness? It is "the tender mercy of our God." The original statement is, "The mercy of the heart of our God." This seems to mean not only tenderness, but much more. The mercy of the heart of God is, of course, the mercy of his great tenderness, the mercy of his infinite gentleness and

consideration, the mercy of his very soul of love. God shows his tender mercy in that he deigns to visit us at all. His great visit to us is in the incarnation of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The proclamation of the Gospel to a nation or to any individual is a visit of God's mercy. The entrance into our hearts of the Holy Spirit, wooing us to Christ and changing the current of our lives, is a visit of God's mercy.

Our God shows his tender mercy in that he visits us with such wonderful and joyous results. Joy, peace, happiness, hope, heaven—these are all implied in the fact that the Dayspring from on high hath visited us. At this Advent season let us get into our hearts more of the blessedness we may have from the consciousness of the fact that the Dayspring hath visited us, that there is sunrise for our souls. And let us make known the message of Christ's coming to all the inhabitants of the world.

Prayer: "O God, who hast so loved the world as to give thine only Son for its redemption, grant us joyful hearts as we approach the Advent time. With angels and spirits of thy saints in glory, we bow before thy throne, O Christ, remembering with thanksgiving that thou wert once a child of Bethlehem. Thou, too, hast entered by the gates of birth into the mystery of our humanity. By an infant's weakness and the obedience of a son thou hast laid hold upon our mortal life. Thou hast shared its pains and sorrows, its labor and repose. Thou hast known the rest of friendship and the bitterness of misunderstanding. By the fellowship of mother's love in Bethlehem and father's care in Egypt, thy boyhood in the fields of Nazareth, thy handling of the workman's tools and wages, thou hast made thyself our Brother. As we bring gifts to others whom thou hast given us for love and care, we offer thee our heart's thanksgiving and

the service of our lives. Our richest gifts are thine. Help us to minister in loving kindness to our brothers, and let thy peace be multipled upon the earth and thy will be accomplished in the affairs of men. Amen."

Repeat the Lord's Prayer in unison.

LOOKING OUT FOR PORT

Motto for the Week: *"Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast."* Heb. 6:19.

Hymn: *"Ten thousand times ten thousand."*—Henry Alford.

Scripture: Hebrews 6:1-19.

Meditation: *LOOKING OUT FOR PORT.*

Text: *"Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ."* Titus 2:13.

A devoted Christian in a prayer meeting recently, by way of testimony, said that when, many years since, he crossed old ocean, he was much in the habit from day to day, of looking over the ship's side, particularly near the prow, and watching the staunch and noble vessel as she steadily and irresistibly ploughed her way through the waves. Just under the bowsprit, and serving the purpose of a figure-head, was the image of a human face. This face to him came to be invested with a wondrous interest. Whatever the hour, whether by night or day; whatever the weather, whether in sunshine or in storm, that face seemed ever looking forward steadfastly to port. Sometimes fearful tempests would prevail. Great surges would rise, and, for a time, completely submerge the face of his friend. But as soon as the wrathful billow subsided, and the vessel recovered from its lurch, on looking again over the ship's side, there, notwithstanding the fearful shock

sustained, the placid face of his friend was to be seen still, as heretofore, faithfully, steadily looking out for port. "And so," he exclaimed, his countenance meantime radiant with the light of the Christian's hope, and spiritual joy, "and so I humbly trust it is in my case. Yea, whatever the trials of the past, notwithstanding all the toils and disappointments of the present, by the grace of God, I am still looking out for port; and not long hence I am anticipating a joyful, triumphant, abundant entrance therein."

Any one who has crossed the ocean knows something of the exhilaration that traveler felt as he watched the steady advance of the boat's prow through the waves in the direction toward port. Any one who is a Christian knows also what that voyager meant as he felt the thrill of the consciousness that he was daily drawing nearer to home. As Christians we stand on the bow of the ship of life and are "looking for that blessed hope and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ"—we are looking out for port.

I. How cheering to the heart is such a hope as this. Do we not know that even a horse travels better when his head is toward home? The day's work in the field may have been hard. The journey made may have been long. But, however heavy the work or long the way, when the faithful animal is turned toward home his whole attitude changes; his head is lifted, his eyes and his ears are turned forward, and he quickens his interest and his pace. How cheering to the heart is the Christian's hope! He counts not the battles he has fought with sin and Satan, he thinks not of the difficulties by the way. He is journeying toward home! He is looking out for port.

II. How may a Christian brighten up his hope? One way is to think—"think on these things." Christians would have brighter hopes if they took more time for meditation.

We live too much in a hurry. We are "jostled out of our spirituality." Some one has said that spiritual meditation "is a lost art." It is certain that there have been times when more emphasis was placed upon it by Christians. Whether it was done wisely and well we cannot say; but this we know, that we cannot have a bright, living, vital, Christian hope without spiritual meditation and thought-giving.

Another way in which to brighten our hope is to read—to read God's word. "Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." The Bible is the Christian voyager's chart. That traveler we mentioned could not have been happy had he not felt sure the ship he was on was heading in the right direction. How did he know that? From the chart and compass. Read; inform yourself; know where you are; know which way you are heading. The better we know our way the brighter hope will be. Indeed, we can have any hope that is founded on knowledge only by knowing our Bibles. Bible-taught, Bible-loving Christians are hopeful Christians. They are able to give a reason for the hope that is in them. They, and they alone, have any adequate knowledge of the home toward which they are hastening, and of the joys that await them there. They, and they alone, have any proper taste for those joys or preparation to take share in them.

There are other means of brightening hope. The listening to testimony, Christian testimony, will do it. Christians have the power of cheering each other very much in this way—by the giving of testimony to what they know and feel and have experienced. "Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another"—they did this in Malachi's time—they do it in our time, and they minister greatly to one another's hope and joy whenever they do.

And sometimes the best way to brighten hope is to go to work. It is always a good way if we are not working.

We have read of a doubting Christian who once asked a minister where heaven is. The minister said to him—for he was one of his rich parishioners—"I have just been to see the widow Manning; if you will order her a barrel of flour and some groceries, and a ton of coal; then go up to her home on the hill and see her; and read a chapter, and kneel down and pray with her, I promise that you will know where heaven is before you get through." The man tried it. He did as was suggested. And not only did all his doubts vanish, his hope brighten, but he said that he had heaven in his own heart before he got through.

Think, read, study, pray, give testimony, and hear testimony, and be a worker in the kingdom of Christ, and your hope is sure to be a bright and blessed one, and every day of your life voyage will be bringing you nearer to the port toward which you look so steadily.

III. What a glorious hope it is the Christian cherishes! A hope of the heavenly home. A hope of entering the spiritual port of eternity. A hope of an abundant entrance into the heavenly kingdom. We need not try to describe that kingdom. No one could if he would. But let us cherish our hope and live to arrive there and share in its joys.

Prayer: "Grant unto us, Almighty God, by thy good Spirit, that we, feeling towards thee as children, and filled full of trust, and hope, and faith, may remain so fixed, that, in the dark, we may trust where we cannot see, and hope where all seems doubtful, ever looking unto thee as our Father that doeth all things well, our Father that ordereth all. Thus may we, knowing that all things are in thy hands, abide thy time, patiently doing the work thou hast given us to do. We ask through Christ. Amen."

Unite in offering the Lord's Prayer.

HOLD FAST THY CROWN

Motto for the Week: *"Lay hold on eternal life."* I Tim. 6:12.

Hymn: *"Fight the good fight with all thy might."*—J. S. B. Monsell.

Scripture: Revelation 3:1-22.

Meditation: *HOLD FAST THY CROWN.*

Text: *"Hold fast that thou hast that no man take thy crown."* Rev. 3:11.

The church at Philadelphia was commended for possessing some strength, for keeping Christ's word, and for not denying his name. But the message came to its members exhorting them to hold fast and watch. It was a message to them, but it comes as a much needed one to us also. "Hold fast that thou hast." See that "no man take thy crown." Watch your crown! Let no man take it from you! Hold it fast!

I. There is always danger of losing one's crown. This is true of earthly crowns. A few years ago the presence in Washington of ex-queen Liliuokalani, of Hawaii, was made the occasion of much newspaper gossip and jest and scoff. As some one has said, referring to that occasion, "There does not seem to be anything more utterly out of place in the world than a dethroned king or queen. While they are on the throne there are plenty to do them reverence, and their power for good or ill is very great; but when the crown is taken from their heads their situation is pitiful indeed." Such an event as the uncrowning of

Hawaii's queen may well suggest to us the emphasis we ought to put on those earnest words of Christ, "Hold fast that thou hast that no man take thy crown."

There are many ways in which we may lose our crown —the victor's wreath that awaits at the goal of life. We need not enumerate them. Neglect, the not guarding it, the not holding fast to it, the exposing of it in dangerous places —much could be said of the folly of these and many other ways in which people put their "crown of life" in jeopardy.

II. Consider, therefore, secondly, some important reasons for obeying the injunction to hold fast one's crown. "Hold fast," keep a good grip upon it, "that no man take thy crown."

"Hold fast;" that which you have is such excellent treasure. You have faith. It may seem little. It may not be really much. But what there is of it is a very precious thing to you. Hold it fast. You have truth. It may be little or much; but what there is of it is very valuable to you. It is valuable in itself, and besides, it may lead you into more truth. Therefore hold what you have fast. "Buy the truth and sell it not." Buy it at any price. Sell it at no price. Hold fast to truth. You have hope. It may not be as large or bright a hope as you would like, but such as it is it is very precious. At what price would you part with even the sort of hope you have? Hold it fast. Let no man despoil you of it.

"Hold fast." There is enough at stake to cause you to be desperately in earnest. Your "crown,"—your wreath of victory at life's goal—everything is at stake— therefore show the mind and muscle of an earnest man concerned about an earnest matter.

"Hold fast." There is enough opposition to require it. It comes from Satan. It comes from satanic men. Let no man take thy crown. Bad comanionship only has lost

many a man his crown. Opposition comes also from our own sinful nature. Watch! Hold fast! He is considered a careless pilot who wrecks a vessel twice on the same rocks; yet there are Christians who almost wreck themselves for time and for eternity on the same sin twenty times.

"Hold fast." There is incentive enough to inspire to it. It is to retain right to thy "crown"—thy wreath of victory at the goal of life. It is a crown to be bestowed by Christ's own hand. Hold fast. Endure. Push on in the Christian life. Watch that you get not delayed or side-tracked. Hold steadily to present duty. Never give over or give up. Keep in the way until your crown of life is secure.

Prayer: "O Lord our God, we cry to thee. Thou art the source of good, and our lot is cast in a world which sin has made evil, and it besets us from day to day. The world besets us, so does its evil. Wilt thou not, O gracious God, answer the prayer which from our longing hearts we raise to thee, deliver us from evil. Temptation is so fierce, so alert, so everywhere that we are, that it seems almost like a thing of life. It springs upon us, we being unaware and unready. We fall into the traps and pitfalls which it lays and digs for our feet, and we rise stained and bruised and sometimes broken. We pray thee, O Lord, lead us not into temptation. What shall we render to thee for what we have already received? We plead our love for him who hath loved and redeemed us from sin by his own blood. We trust our all to thee, in him. 'We are persuaded that he is able to keep that which we have committed unto him against that day.' Let not our trust be found misplaced in the day of our need, we beseech thee. And, O God, forgive us our sins, we beseech thee, and draw us ever nearer to thyself, and at the last let us be evermore with thee. For Christ's sake. Amen."

Unite together in the Lord's Prayer.

THE SWEET INCENSE OF FAMILY PRAYERS.

SOME SUGGESTED PRAYERS FOR USE IN FAMILY WORSHIP.

*"There was a marriage at Cana of Galilee * * * and Jesus was bidden."* John 2:1-11.

OUR DAILY WORK.

"O Lord, give thy blessing, we pray thee, to our daily work, that we may do it in faith and heartily, as to the Lord and not unto men. All our powers of body and mind are thine, and we would fain devote them to thy service. Sanctify them, and the work in which they are engaged; let us not be slothful, but fervent in spirit, and do thou, O Lord, so bless our efforts that they may bring forth in us the fruits of true wisdom. Teach us to seek after truth and enable us to gain it; but grant that we may ever speak the truth in love; that, while we know earthly things, we may know thee, and be known by thee, through and in thy Son Jesus Christ. Give us this day thy Holy Spirit, that we may be thine in body and spirit in all our work and all our refreshments, through Jesus Christ thy Son, our Lord. Amen."

"Our Father which art in heaven," etc.

THY WILL OUR PEACE.

"We desire, O God, this day most earnestly to please thee; to do thy will in each several thing which thou shalt

give us to do; to bear each thing which thou shalt allow to befall us contrary to our will, meekly, humbly, patiently, as a gift from thee to subdue self-will in us, and to make thy will wholly ours. What we do, make us do simply as thy children; let us be, throughout the day, as children in their loving father's presence, ever looking up to thee. May we love thee for thy love. May we thank thee, if not in words, yet in our hearts, for each gift of thy love, for each comfort which thou allowest us day by day. Amen."

"Our Father which art in heaven," etc.

GENERAL THANKSGIVING.

"Almighty God, Father of all mercies, we, thine unworthy servants, do give thee most humble and hearty thanks for all thy goodness and loving kindness to us, and to all men. We bless thee for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; but, above all, for thine inestimable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ; for the means of grace, and for the hope of glory. And, we beseech thee, give us that due sense of all thy mercies, that our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful, and that we may show forth thy praise, not only with our lips, but in our lives; by giving up ourselves to thy service, and by walking before thee in holiness and righteousness all our days, through Jesus Christ our Lord; to whom with thee and the Holy Ghost, be all honor and glory, world without end. Amen."

"Our Father which art in heaven," etc.

MORNING MERCIES.

O Lord God Almighty, we thank thee for having preserved us through the past night, and for granting us health and strength for our duties on this day. Blessed be

the Lord for all his mercies; for giving us food to eat and raiment to put on, and for delivering us from many evils which our sins have justly deserved. We thank thee especially, O Lord, for the gift of Jesus Christ, thy Son. We confess before thee our exceeding guilt, and we pray thee, for Christ's sake, to pardon our offenses, and to receive our souls when we die. Amen."

"Our Father which art in heaven," etc.

ABIDING TRUST

"O God, our Father, help us to trust in thee. Keep us from anxious thought for the things of today and for the things of tomorrow. Help us to realize that thou art as rich in resources in the future as in the past, that as thou hast been thou wilt ever be near us. Our experience of joy and sorrow has taught us how great is our need of thee. Increase and impress our trust from day to day as we follow in the path that leads to thee. Through Christ, our Lord, we ask. Amen."

"Our Father which art in heaven," etc.

GRATITUDE AND CONSECRATION.

"O Gracious Father, we worship thee as the source of all the blessings of our lives. From thee cometh down every good and perfect gift. The day comes and brings with it that which thou givest: Continued life, and light, and beauty, and work, and opportunity to improve the gifts that are equally from thy hand. The night comes and brings with it peace and quiet, rest of mind and body and preparation for what awaits us in another day of toil. We hunger and are fed. We thirst and are satisfied. We cry out for thee and thou givest us no less than Thyself. We are sinful and thou pardonest. We are forsaken and thou

comfortest. We are weak and thou strengthenest. We are unholy and thou purifiest. We are frail and perishing and thou givest through Christ eternal life. Thanks be unto thee for thy great gifts! May they lead us to admiration and worship, to gratitude and consecration, to humility and a service that shall be counted worthy because offered in the name of thy dear Son our Saviour, to whom with thee, the Father, and with thee, O Holy Spirit, be praise throughout the ages. Amen."

"Our Father which art in heaven," etc.

THE NEW DAY.

"We praise thee, O God, with the morning light, and in the brightness of a new day we bless thy Holy name. For all thou hast bestowed upon us with the gift of life, making us in thine own image, and granting us to share as children in thy knowledge and thy love, in thy work and in thy joy; we thank thee, heavenly Father. For all good things in the world, for food and raiment, for home and friendship, for useful tasks and pure pleasures; we thank thee, heavenly Father. For all spiritual blessings, for thy holy Word, for the Christian fellowship, for the good example and blessed memory of thy saints, for the secret influence of thy Spirit; we thank thee, heavenly Father. And above all we praise and bless thee for the life and death of thy dear Son, our Saviour Jesus Christ. Amen."

"Our Father which art in heaven," etc.

THE LOVE OF CHRIST.

"O Lord, our God, we thank thee for the revelation of Thyself in Jesus Christ our Lord. We thank thee for the breadth and length and height and depth of the love of Christ which passeth knowledge. We know what his love

things, to live a life at peace with God and ourselves. May we understand the universality of that love and how God so loved the world that He gave His only beloved Son for the life of the world, and may we not be satisfied until every nation and every man shall have heard that wonderful story of redeeming love. May the love of Christ constrain us to a sacrificial service, and may the Spirit of Jesus guide us in his footsteps. For His name's sake. Amen."

"Our Father which art in heaven," etc.

ABUNDANT LIFE.

"O Lord, our God, we remember that Jesus said that he had come into the world to give life and to give it more be the expression of our faith. Bless the Church of Christ abundantly, and we pray for thy great gift of life to us. The life in us that like the tree of life, bears fruit for every season and scatters its healing among the nations. We would not be satisfied with a mere existence. We would enjoy the abundant life, a life of peace and power, a life of purity and purpose, a life of service and sacrifice. Breathe upon us, O God, and inspire us to noble thoughts and to high endeavors that we may be workers together with God. Bless our home, and may the gladness of the new life make joy everywhere, and may the voice of song for service. Bless all who give of their time and talent for the benefit of others, and may the time soon come when we shall see his face and the light of his countenance will be our light of life. For His name's sake. Amen."

"Our Father which art in heaven," etc.

GRACE AND GLORY

"O Lord of grace and glory, we thank thee for the grace wherein we stand, and for the grace that awaits us.

To glorify thee is our chief end, and thou wilt crown our end with the glory which thou hast promised them who through Christ become the sons of God. We pray thee that thy grace may be shed abroad in our hearts, more and more from day to day, that here on earth we may still more and more glorify thee by lives which exhibit the power of the Son of God. To this end, we beseech thee, pour on us in copious baptism the Holy Spirit. We would live the spiritual life, O Lord God Almighty, and we plead with thee for that indwelling of grace that will enable us to realize our own belongings. And to the Father and the Son and Holy Ghost be the glory, as it was in the beginning Amen."

"Our Father which art in heaven," etc.

THE HURRYING HOURS.

"O Almighty Father, we go to the duties of this day with gladsome hearts, since all days are Thine; but we also beseech thee to give us due seriousness in our joy, because this one day's work bears upon the destiny of our own immortal souls, upon the well-being of society, of which we are a vital part, and upon the speed of thy Kingdom's coming. Help us to be sincere in our motives, strictly conscientious in all our methods, large-visioned in our ends aimed at, severely loyal to thee, instant and unwavering in our obedience to the least revealings of thy will. Teach us to bear patiently with our fellow-men, to be self-mastered under the ills of life, to heroically take up the cross and be crucified for thee if Thou does need it of us. Pardon our sins and extend to our infirmities the long-suffering of thy grace. Grant us to see Him who is invisible, and to spend even the unconscious moments of the day under the spell of Jesus Christ, our Saviour and Lord.

Help us to enter into his serenity in the presence of the hurrying hours. Key our hearts to his triumphant note, that we may today have a share in his victory; and when life's long day is done, waken us into the glory of thy perfect tomorrow. We ask it all in the name of Jesus Christ, thy Son. Amen."

"Our Father which art in heaven," etc.

THE PERPETUAL PRESENCE.

"Our Father, we seek the shelter and the peace of thy presence, that we may find the strength and inspiration that we need for the day's work! But we would carry the gift vouchsafed to us in the place of prayer out into the activities of our busy hours so perfectly that our households and offices shall be sanctuaries where we find thee near and good. Grant us the power to make the spirit of our moments of prayer the spirit wherein we work and rejoice day and night. We long for the ceaseless communion, for the perpetual presence of thyself, our Father. Grant this blessing to our dear ones, to all wayward and careless men and women, to the aged and feeble, to the sick and the bereaved, and to little children. May we all tarry this day in the Father's presence! We ask through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen."

"Our Father which art in heaven," etc.

GRACE BEFORE MEAT.

Some Suggested Forms for Use at Table.

"For these and all thy mercies we give thanks, O God."

We thank thee, our Father, for this food. Bless it to our use and strengthen us for thy service. We ask through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

We thank thee, our Father, for thy remembrance of us and for thy provision for all our needs.

Lord, help us to receive all good things as from thy hand, and to use them to thy praise. Amen.

Heavenly Father, make us thankful to thee, and mindful of others, as we receive these blessings, in Jesus' Name. Amen.

O Lord God, bless the gifts of thy hand to our use, and us to thy service, for Christ's sake. Amen.

Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits. Amen. (Repeated in concert.)

Our Father: by whose kindness we live to behold the light of this day, and by whose bounty these gifts are bestowed; give us strength to work this day in love and courage and gratitude; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Our Father: who hast brought us thus far through the day, and given us this rest and refreshment; sustain us till eventide, and bring us safe and thankful to the close of the day. Amen.

O God, our Heavenly Father: whose gifts have crowned the day with good, we thank thee for these tokens of thy loving care. Let thy presence bless us through the evening hours; and give us thankful hearts for all thy loving kindness. Amen.

We thank thee, O Lord, for the mercies that are new every morning and fresh every evening. Help us in return to give thee the love of our hearts and the service of our hands, for Christ's sake. Amen.

Lord Jesus, be our holy Guest,
Our morning Joy, our evening Rest;
And with our daily bread impart
Thy love and peace to every heart. Amen.

Be present at our table, Lord,
Be here and everywhere adored;
These mercies bless, and grant that we
May feast in Paradise with thee.

Bless to us this Sabbath day, our Father, and go with us through all its hours. As we take this food from thy hand, so may we receive from thee the Word of Life today. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

FOR CHILDREN'S USE.

For these and all thy mercies we give thanks, O God. Amen.

Dear Jesus, we thank thee for this food. Bless us and keep us all. Amen.

God bless this food, and bless us all,
And keep us safe, whate'er befall.
For Jesus' sake. Amen.

We thank Thee, Lord, for daily bread,
The blessings on this table spread.
And pray thee, Lord, that we may be
And do whatever pleases thee.
For Jesus' sake. Amen.

Lord, bless the food which now we take,
And make us good, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

Dear Father in heaven, we owe thee everything we have. We thank thee for it all, and we will try to do thy will. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

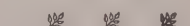
CHILDREN'S PRAYERS.

EVENING PRAYERS.

Now I lay me down to sleep;
I pray thee, Lord, my soul to keep;
If I should die before I wake,
I pray thee, Lord, my soul to take;
And this I ask for Jesus' sake. Amen.

This night, my God! for Jesus' sake,
Thy blessing give to me;
Pardon my sins, and may I wake
A better child to be. Amen.

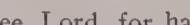
Jesus, tender Shepherd, hear me;
Bless thy little lamb tonight;
Through the darkness be thou near me,
Keep me safe till morning light.
All this day thy hand hath led me,
And I thank thee for thy care;
Thou hast clothed me, warmed and fed me,
Listen to my evening prayer.
Let my sins be all forgiven;
Bless the friends I love so well;
Take me, when I die, to heaven,
Happy there with thee to dwell.



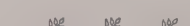
Dear Father in heaven! I thank thee that thou hast been with me during this day, and hast brought me safely to its close. Help me to be thankful for thy watchful care over me. Be thou now also with me during the darkness of the night. Watch over me and let no evil come nigh unto me. Give unto me sweet and refreshing rest, and grant that I may arise again in health and vigor. Help me to be thy loving child, and to grow in grace daily. All this I ask for Jesus' sake. Amen.

MORNING PRAYERS.

Lord, I awake and see the light,
For thou hast kept me through the night;
To thee I lift my hands and pray,
Keep me from sin throughout this day;
And if I die before 'tis done,
Save me through Jesus Christ thy Son. Amen.



I thank thee, Lord, for having kept
My soul and body while I slept.
I pray thee, Lord, that through this day,
In all I do, or think, or say,
I may be kept from harm and sin,
Let me in thy blest love partake
And made both pure and good within.



Now I awake to see the day,
I give my soul to Christ away;
If I should die before the even,
I trust he'll take me up in heaven. Amen.

❦ ❦ ❦

O God, my Father in heaven! I thank thee that thou hast preserved and kept me during the night that is passed, and permitted me to see the light of a new day. Be thou with me this day, and fit me for its duties and privileges. Help me to love thee above all things. Help me to love and obey my parents and teachers. Keep thou me from evil, and incline my heart to that which is good, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

PRAYER HYMN.

Gentle Jesus, meek and mild,
Look upon a little child;
Pity my simplicity,
Suffer me to come to thee.

Fain I would to thee be brought;
Gracious God, forbid it not;
In the kingdom of thy grace,
Give a little child a place.

O, supply my every want,
Feed the young and tender plant,
Day and night my keeper be,
Every moment watch round me. Amen.

CLOSET AND ALTAR

Some Suggested Prayers for Private Use.

"Enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret; and thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly." Matt. 6:6.

A DAY'S DUTIES.

"With gratitude for thy protection during the night watches, I begin, O Lord, the new life of a new day. My path will be the busy thoroughfares, walk thou with me unseen. Let not my heart cleave to these things, but through the sweet influence of thy Spirit, incline me to seek things that endure. I shall be tempted today; I may be drawn to the verge of some awful mistake, in the swift moment of danger when I cannot withdraw to my closet of prayer,—give me to know the right and the power to do it. Let not trifles ruffle my temper, nor disappointments unman me; let not exacting duties make me selfish and churlish; give me rather a sunshiny face, and forthright hand, and the joy of a word fitly spoken to some timid, discouraged soul. Strength for the day's service give me in such measure as Thou willest; pass by my sins of omission; and when the shadows fall, bring me again, unsullied by word or deed, to sweet refreshing sleep. Through Christ, I ask. Amen."

"Our Father which art in heaven," etc.

DAILY GRACE FOR DAILY NEED.

"O God, my Father in heaven, I lift my heart in gratitude to thee, for thou hast kept me through the night. I thank thee that thou dost not grow weary in blessing me. Thy loving kindness is ever new unto me. I thank thee for thy preserving care over me during the night, and for the light of another day. In thy name, O Lord, I would enter upon the toils and cares of a new day. Be thou with me and guide me in all my engagements, that I may serve thee and live to thee. Thine I am, and unto thee would live.

O God, I humbly confess before thee my sins and infirmities, and beseech thee, enter not into judgment with me. For the sake of thy Son, Jesus Christ, my Lord and Saviour, forgive all my sins and blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me. A broken spirit and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

O Lord, help me to begin this day in thy fear and to end it to thy glory. I am weak; be thou my strength. I am ignorant and do easily err; be thou my light and my guide. Help me to live soberly, righteously and godly in this present evil world. Help me to go forth to my daily duties with cheerfulness and in humble dependence upon thy aid. Prosper my labors and establish the work of my hands.

O God, I humbly invoke thy blessing upon all my friends and neighbors. Suit thy blessing to the wants of all. Prosper and bless thy people. Bless thy church, ministers and people. Bless my pastor in his efforts to lead souls to the Saviour of the world and to glorify thy name. Bless the preaching thy word, to the salvation of precious souls

and to the praise of thy glorious grace, through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen."

"Our Father which art in heaven," etc.

PURITY OF HEART.

"Eternal God, sanctify my body and soul, my thoughts and my intentions, my words and actions, that whatsoever I shall think, or speak, or do, may be by me designed for the glorification of thy Name, and, by thy blessing, it may be effective and successful in the work of God, according as it can be capable. Lord, turn my necessities into virtue; the works of nature into the works of grace; by making them orderly, regular, temperate; and let no pride or self-seeking, no covetousness or revenge, no little ends and low imaginations, pollute my spirit, and unhallow any of my words and actions; but let my body be a servant of my spirit, and both body and spirit servants of Jesus; that, doing all things for thy glory here, I may be partaker of thy glory hereafter, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

"Our Father which art in heaven," etc.

LIFE INDEED.

"O Lord, I thank thee for life, and for the privileges of living it, for faith to strengthen it, hope to brighten it, love to sweeten it, and truth to enlighten it. May the duty of each day be performed faithfully, and while I must not wish for sorrow, yet when it comes, help me, O Lord, to find thy sweet portion in it, and in its darkness may I ever look for the glints of thy welcome sunshine. To everything which in thy wisdom thou dost send to my life, may I be able to say with sincerity, 'Thy will be done.' Give me the grace to be courageous in danger, patient in suffering, pure in thought, kind in deed, and true in friendship. Make me unswerving in my progress towards my ideal, and above all

give me a clean heart, for a clean heart maketh a pure life. May I ever see and find the best in my fellows, and as for their faults may I ever throw around them the sweet mantle of charity. May the greatest proof that I love thee be found in my sincere and unselfish love for my brother-man. And when my weary soul weighs anchor, cut softly and tenderly, O Lord, this earthly cable that binds me to the shore of time, and assure me a safe voyage across the 'bar,' and I shall count all the pains of this mortal life a privilege to bear, knowing that at last I shall hear the 'Well done' from my heavenly Pilot. I ask through Christ. Amen."

"Our Father which art in heaven," etc.

FAITH, HOPE, LOVE.

O God give me fatih: Faith that Thou art good; that the spirit cannot perish; that life is worth living; faith in Christ, in myself, in my fellow-men, in the reality of progress.

O God, give me hope: Hope for the eternal life, the unfettered freedom, the infinite opportunity; hope for growing capacity, wider outlook, more worthy success, hope that shall ever be buoyant toward the best.

O God give me Love: Love for thee and for my fellow-creatures; love for truth, peace and beauty; love for the Christ-like life and the Christ-like sacrifice; Love that lives by service, and never fails.

And with these great gifts, O God, give me good sense, solid judgment and honest humility, that the coming days may be full of happy work, real achievement, loyal friendship and innocent joy.

These blessings I crave in the name of Jesus Christ, my Lord. Amen."

"Our Father which art in heaven," etc.

EVERY MOMENT.

"Guard me, O God, against the unseen dangers of this day. Every moment, from first to last, is open to thee. It is all a journey that thy thought has traveled. Thou canst guide me through it because thou hast been through it. The temptation lurking for me behind some false pleasure, thou hast noted it. A failure or flaw in my work, it is already before thine eyes. The friends I am to meet, the opportunities I am to enjoy, the delights that will minister to me, they are present even now in thy consciousness. And so, committing myself to thee, I shall not be surprised by the sudden assault of Satan, nor daunted by failure, nor over-elated by success, nor enervated by delight. I shall become a part of thy long thinking, thy large designs. I shall enter into thy peace. I shall live somewhat as my God lives, dwelling indeed in Him and He in me. May this be my blessed lot, Lord Jesus, today and all days. Amen."

"Our Father which art in heaven," etc.

WITH THEE.

"Help me, my Lord and Saviour, to live day by day. Help me start the day with thee. May I meditate upon thy Word as I awake. May I genuinely pray before I speak to any other soul. May I know thy companionship all through the day, that every simple duty may be thine and mine. May anxiety, hurry and ill temper change to peace, control and cheerfulness. May I be willing to have thee, O Christ, live in me, that I may be like thee more and more from day to day. Fed by thy Word, and controlled by thy Will, may prayer, thought and service blend in a life like unto Thine. Amen."

"Our Father which art in heaven," etc.

WORK THY WILL.

"Teach me, O Father, how to ask thee each moment, silently, for thy help. If I fail, teach me at once to ask thee to forgive me. If I am disquieted, enable me, by thy grace, quickly to turn to thee. May nothing this day come between me and thee. May I will, do and say, just what thou, my loving Father, willest me to will, do and say. Work thy holy will in me and through me this day, protect me, guide me, bless me, within and without, that I may do something this day for love of thee; and that I may, this evening, be nearer to thee, though I see it not, nor know it. Lead me, O Lord, in a straight way unto thyself, and keep me unto the end. Amen."

"Our Father which art in heaven," etc.

THE STRONG TOWER.

"Merciful God, be thou now unto me a strong tower of defence, I humbly entreat thee. Give me grace to await thy liesure, and patiently to bear what thou doest unto me; nothing doubting or mistrusting thy goodness towards me; for thou knowest what is good for me letter than I do. Therefore do with me in all things what thou wilt; only arm me, I beseech thee, with thine armor, that I may stand fast; above all things, taking to me the shield of faith; praying always that I may refer myself wholly to thy will, abiding thy pleasure, and comforting myself in those troubles which it shall please thee to send me, seeing such troubles are profitable for me; and I am assuredly persuaded that all thou doest cannot but be well; and unto thee be all honor and glory. Amen."

"Our Father which art in heaven," etc.

EVENING MERCIES.

"O Lord God, whose mercy is from everlasting to everlasting, I thank thee for thy grace by which I have been sustained this day. Thou hast kept me and helped me to perform my daily labor; and Thou hast provided for my daily wants. Help me to accept all blessings as coming from thy fatherly hand. I thank thee that thou art ever mindful of my wants, and dost supply them so bountifully. Help me to receive and enjoy them with a grateful and loving heart. Thou art the Giver of every good and perfect gift and unto thee would I render unfeigned thanks for all thy goodness unto me.

O Lord, bless the labors and experiences of the day that is past. Bless my intercourse with my fellowmen. Bless all men—relatives, friends, neighbors and enemies. Bestow thy saving grace upon all. Grant unto all faith and true repentence, and lead them to the Saviour of mankind.

Bless, O Lord, thy holy Church. Prosper and bless all her ministers and people, all her institutions, and all the efforts of thy people for the extension of thy kingdom in the world. May the light of the gospel speedily shine everywhere, and banish the darkness of sin from the earth. May the set time soon come when all the people of the earth shall be thy people.

O Lord God, I now commit myself into thy hands. Be thou with me when I lie down, and when I rise up; be thou with me in sickness and in health; and in the hour of death forsake me not, merciful Saviour, but grant me a calm and peaceful departure out of the world, and a triumphant entrance into thy heavenly kingdom, through Jesus Christ, my Lord and my Saviour. Amen."

"Our Father which art in heaven," etc.

CLOSE OF DAY.

O God, my heavenly Father, in whom I live, and move and have my being, I give thee humble thanks for all thy mercies renewed unto me every day; for life and health, for food and raiment, for relatives and friends, and for all mercies known and unknown. Grant that I may receive all things as coming from thee, and show forth my gratitude by a holy and obedient life.

I adore thee for thy fatherly care over me this day, and for all the blessings enjoyed. Grant now thy blessing upon all that I have done this day, as far as it has been in accordance with thy will; and mercifully forgive all that is evil and displeasing in thy sight. O do thou give me a penitent heart, and forgive all my sins. Let my heart be set to obey thy will and to glorify thy name. Enable me to resist the temptations of the world, the flesh and the devil. Help me to choose thy ways, and diligently walk therein; help me to walk in the narrow way which leadeth unto life, and to shun the way of sin and death.

O Lord, I now commit myself, body and soul, into thy hands. Grant unto me refreshing repose, and let no evil come nigh unto me. Preserve my health and permit me to rise again in the morning with thanksgiving upon my lips and thy love in my heart. Bless now, O Lord, all who are near and dear unto me, and all for whom I pray Be thou especially gracious unto all suffering ones. Help them to cast their burdens upon the Lord, and do thou grant unto them that peace which the world cannot give nor take away. Hear me for Jesus' sake. Amen"

"Our Father which art in heaven," etc.

THY WORD A LIGHT.

"O God, my dear Father in heaven, I lift my heart and voice unto thee in gratitude and love. Thy mercies are new unto me every morning and thy faithfulness every night. I praise thee for life, and health, and reason; for food, and raiment, and home; for friends and kindred. Help me to remember all thy goodness, that it may awaken purer love and greater devotion to thee in my heart. Enable me not to conform my life to a sinful world, but to have my conversation in heaven.

Give me strength for labors, courage for conflicts, patience under afflictions, fidelity to duty, and faith that shall endure unto the end, and shall make me more than a conqueror over sin and death. Grant me grace to keep my heart from evil thoughts, and my lips from speaking guile. Keep my feet from falling. Bless my intercourse with others. Help me to do unto others as I would that they should do unto me. Help me to be true and just in all my dealings.

I pray for all men. Be thou merciful to all according to their several conditions and necessities, and may thy goodness and loving kindness, draw the hearts of all unto thyself. May the sorrows of this life lead all to thee, the source of life, comfort and peace.

Bless unto me thy word, O Lord. Help me daily to search the Scriptures in the light of thy Holy Spirit. Impress thy truth deeply and savingly upon my heart. May thy word be unto me a lamp to my feet and a light to my pathway. May thy word always be precious to my soul. May I love its precepts, understand its doctrines, and rest upon its promises. Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief. When I read thy word, do thou thyself teach me. May thy truth fall upon good ground in

my poor heart, and bring forth much fruit unto eternal life.

O Lord, I now commit myself and all my interests into thy care. Bless me, keep me, forgive me, and finally save me through Jesus Christ. Amen."

"Our Father which art in heaven," etc.

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